

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1566

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Stevie Wonder, in recognition of his ground-breaking musical achievements, activism, and contributions to the music industry.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 19, 2007

Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. WATT, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. CARSON, Mr. ELILISON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. WATSON, Ms. WATERS, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. McCOTTER, and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Stevie Wonder, in recognition of his ground-breaking musical achievements, activism, and contributions to the music industry.

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 “Stevie Wonder Con-

5 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds as follows:

3 (1) Stevland Hardaway Judkins, later known as
4 Stevie Wonder, born in Saginaw, Michigan to Lula
5 Mae Hardaway on May 13, 1950, has been a major
6 figure in the music industry for the past 40 years.7 (2) Born prematurely, Stevie Wonder was
8 placed in an incubator where an excess of oxygen ex-
9 acerbated a visual condition known as retinopathy of
10 prematurity, which ultimately caused his blindness.11 (3) In 1961, Ronnie White of the Miracles ar-
12 ranged an audition with Motown Records' Berry
13 Gordy Jr, who quickly signed him and named him
14 "Little" Stevie Wonder.15 (4) His first album, "Little Stevie Wonder: the
16 12 Year Old Genius", made the child a huge star,
17 and produced a number 1 hit with the single "Fin-
18 gertips" (Part 2) in 1963.19 (5) The following year, Stevie Wonder enrolled
20 in the Michigan School for the Blind, where he stud-
21 ied classical piano.22 (6) In 1964, Wonder recorded little while his
23 voiced changed and he returned in 1965 without the
24 "Little" nickname.25 (7) His first recording as a teenager "Uptight
26 (Everything's Alright)," which he co-wrote with

1 Henry Cosby and Sylvia Moy, was a number 3 pop
2 hit in the United States and hit number 1 on the
3 rhythm and blues charts; this was the beginning of
4 a string of number 1 hits that continued unbroken
5 for over 6 years.

6 (8) Stevie Wonder co-wrote almost all of his
7 singles from 1967 onwards, and collaborated with
8 some of the most notable Motown artists.

9 (9) Shortly after reaching his 21st birthday in
10 the spring of 1971, his recording contract with
11 Motown Records expired, and he conditioned his re-
12 turn on obtaining complete artistic control of his
13 records.

14 (10) Motown Records agreed and he became
15 the youngest artist with the ability to artistically
16 control his career.

17 (11) In 1976, Stevie Wonder's double album
18 “Songs in the Key of Life” was another huge critical
19 commercial success with 2 number 1 pop hits, “Sir
20 Duke” and “I Wish”, as well as the classic “Isn’t
21 She Lovely”.

22 (12) With no new music for the next 3 years,
23 aside from the release of the mostly instrumental
24 soundtrack to the documentary The Secret Life Of
25 Plants in 1979, he returned to pop with “Hotter

1 Than July” in 1980, which included the United
2 States pop Top 5 hit “Masterblaster (Jamming)”.

3 (13) “Hotter Than July” also included the hit
4 single “Happy Birthday,” which Stevie Wonder, one
5 of the main figures in the campaign to have the
6 birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. become a
7 national holiday, used to popularize the movement.

8 (14) Wonder, along with the Congressional
9 Black Caucus and other civil rights organizations,
10 hosted the Rally for Peace Press Conference in 1981
11 in Washington, D.C., where he was joined by a
12 peaceful crowd of 50,000 supporters, and such per-
13 sonalities as Diana Ross, Gladys Knight, Jesse
14 Jackson, and Gil Scott-Heron.

15 (15) The first Martin Luther King Day was
16 celebrated on January 15, 1986, with a concert
17 headlined by Stevie Wonder.

18 (16) Stevie Wonder pioneered the use of the
19 synthesizer in rhythm and blues, and also broadened
20 his lyrics to encompass racial problems and spiritual
21 concerns.

22 (17) In his acceptance speech as the recipient
23 of the 1984 Oscar for Best Song, he dedicated his
24 award to then imprisoned civil rights leader Nelson

1 Mandela; the South African government promptly
2 banned Wonder's music from that country.

3 (18) In 1985, Stevie Wonder performed on the
4 number 1 charity singles "We Are the World" by
5 USA for Africa and "That's What Friends Are For"
6 by Dionne Warwick & Friends; both songs raised
7 awareness about famine in Africa and the AIDS epi-
8 demic, respectively.

9 (19) Stevie Wonder returned quickly with the
10 new album, "Characters" in 1987 which was a hit
11 on the rhythm and blues side, topping the album
12 charts and producing a number 1 hit in "Skeletons."
13 and was his final release of the 1980s.

14 (20) He returned in 1991 with the soundtrack
15 to the Spike Lee film, Jungle Fever, and his next
16 full album was 1995's "Conversation Peace".

17 (21) He won two Grammy's for the single "For
18 Your Love".

19 (22) Since then, Motown has released a number
20 of re-masters and compilations to continue Wonder's
21 vast legacy.

22 (23) "A Time to Love", Wonder's first new
23 album in 10 years, was released in 2005.

24 (24) Stevie Wonder has recorded more than 30
25 Top10 hits, won 22 Grammy Awards (a record for

1 a solo artist), including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and has been inducted into both the
2 Rock and Roll and the Songwriters Halls of Fame.
3

4 (25) He is the recipient of countless other
5 awards and honors such as the U.S. Distinguished
6 Service Award, 1999 MusiCares Person of the Year,
7 Rhythm and Blues Foundation Pioneer Awards
8 Lifetime Achievement, NAACP Image Award,
9 United in Recovery's Ambassador of Peace Award,
10 and an ASCAP Founders Award.

11 (26) Stevie Wonder has become one of the most
12 successful and well-known artists in the world, with
13 9 United States number 1 hits to his name and
14 album sales totaling more than 100,000,000 units.

15 (27) Stevie Wonder has also been active in such
16 social causes as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the
17 Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation, and his annual
18 House Full of Toys Benefit Concert and he is a
19 leading figure in the "Charge Against Hunger" in
20 conjunction with American Express, which has
21 raised over \$150,000,000 dollars to feed nearly
22 6,000,000 underprivileged people yearly.

23 (28) At age 49, Stevie Wonder was the youngest-ever
24 recipient in the 22-year history of Kennedy
25 Center Honors, given annually for lifetime contribu-

1 tion to arts and culture, and presented to Stevie
2 Wonder by President Bill Clinton in Washington
3 D.C., December 5, 1999.

4 (29) On October 17th, 2006, Stevie Wonder re-
5 ceived a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Na-
6 tional Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

7 SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

8 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
9 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
10 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
11 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
12 medal of appropriate design to Stevie Wonder, in recogni-
13 tion of his ground-breaking musical achievements, activ-
14 ism, and contributions to the music industry.

15 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
16 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
17 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
18 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
19 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
20 retary.

21 SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

22 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
23 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
24 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
25 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,

1 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
2 and the cost of the gold medal.

3 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursuant
5 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 sections
8 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
9 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
10 items.

11 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF
12 SALE.**

13 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
14 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
15 Public Enterprise Fund, such amounts as may be necessary
16 to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant
17 to this Act.

18 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
19 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
20 3 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
21 Enterprise Fund.

