

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1603

To authorize Congress to award a gold medal to Jerry Lewis, in recognition of his outstanding service to the Nation.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 2007

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize Congress to award a gold medal to Jerry Lewis, in recognition of his outstanding service to the Nation.

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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) A native of New Jersey, Jerry Lewis is a
6 gifted comedian and has been a fixture in the enter-
7 tainment community for more than 5 decades.

8 (2) Born Joseph Levitch on March 16, 1926, in
9 Newark, New Jersey, Jerry Lewis began his career
10 by performing in local nightclubs.

1 (3) With his hope of breaking into show busi-
2 ness fading, Jerry Lewis was encouraged by his fel-
3 low comedians to continue his act, and soon there-
4 after, he formed a show business partnership with
5 Dean Martin that would skyrocket both to fame.
6 While performing with Martin in New York City, the
7 pair was approached by a motion picture executive
8 who offered them a contract with Paramount Pic-
9 tures. They went on to make 16 major motion pic-
10 tures during their 10-year partnership.

11 (4) Jerry Lewis' talent and enthusiasm kept
12 America laughing during some of the most turbulent
13 periods in our history, World War II, the Cold War,
14 and the assassinations of President John F. Ken-
15 nedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. One of the
16 most successful performers in show business, Jerry
17 Lewis has received worldwide acclaim for his unique
18 ability and style with both comedy and drama. He
19 has been the star of stage, screen, radio, television,
20 print, and recordings. He is considered among the
21 elite in the history of comedy.

22 (5) But aside from his comic persona, Jerry
23 Lewis has been an active champion for the Muscular
24 Dystrophy Association (MDA) since the early 1950s.
25 In 1966, he began the "Jerry Lewis MDA Labor

1 Day Telethon,” an annual television program that
2 benefits children and adults affected by muscular
3 dystrophy and related neuromuscular diseases. Now
4 in its 42nd year, the show, which is broadcast on
5 some 200 stations nationwide, including Puerto
6 Rico, and worldwide on the Internet, raises tens of
7 millions of dollars annually.

8 (6) Jerry Lewis summed up why he devotes so
9 much of his time and energy to this cause with the
10 words: “I shall pass through this world but once.
11 Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness
12 that I can show to any human being let me do it
13 now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not
14 pass this way again.”.

15 (7) Jerry Lewis has received numerous awards
16 for his outstanding service to our Nation. He was
17 nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his dedica-
18 tion to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

19 (8) In June of 1978, the communications in-
20 dustry honored Jerry Lewis with the National Asso-
21 ciation of Television Program Executives Award of
22 the Year for his humanitarian efforts in raising
23 funds to combat neuromuscular diseases. Among his
24 numerous awards are induction into the French Le-
25 gion of Honor as “Legion Commander,” the Mur-

1 ray-Green Award for Community Service, the high-
2 est honor that the AFL–CIO bestows upon an indi-
3 vidual, the American Medical Association Lifetime
4 Achievement Award, and the Governor’s Award
5 (Emmy) from the Academy of Television Arts and
6 Sciences.

7 (9) In September of 1976, the United States
8 Senate unanimously adopted a resolution expressing
9 their appreciation of his philanthropic endeavors and
10 in particular his fight to find a cure for muscular
11 dystrophy. In February 2001, Jerry Lewis led a del-
12 egation of MDA scientists and clients to testify be-
13 fore a subcommittee of the United States Senate re-
14 sulting in the introduction and subsequent passage
15 of the MD-Care Act (Public Law 107-84; 115 Stat.
16 823), a first step toward securing a dramatic boost
17 in Federal funding for research into all forms of
18 muscular dystrophy.

19 (10) Joining the ranks of distinguished Con-
20 gressional Gold Medal recipients would be a fitting
21 accolade to this consummate entertainer, world-re-
22 nowned humanitarian and “living legend” who has
23 served for some 5 decades as National Chairman of
24 the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

1 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President
3 Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House
4 of Representatives are authorized to make appropriate ar-
5 rangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress,
6 of a gold medal of appropriate design to Jerry Lewis, in
7 recognition of his outstanding service to the Nation.

8 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the
9 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
10 of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
11 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
12 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
13 retary.

14 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

15 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
16 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
17 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 at
18 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
19 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
20 and the cost of the gold medal.

21 **SEC. 4. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

22 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under
23 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
24 of title 31, United States Code.

25 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
26 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals

1 struck pursuant to this Act shall be considered numis-
2 matic items.

3 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
4 **OF SALE.**

5 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 are authorized to be charged against the United States
7 Mint Public Enterprise Fund, such sums as may be nec-
8 essary to pay for the cost of the medals struck pursuant
9 to this Act.

10 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
11 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
12 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
13 Fund.

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