

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 255

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (for herself, Mr. CULBERSON, and Mr. CUELLAR) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

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 “NASA 50th Anniver-
5 sary Commemorative Coin Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) the National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
2 istration began operation on October 1, 1958, with
3 about 8,000 employees and an annual budget of
4 \$100,000,000;

5 (2) over the next 50 years, the National Aero-
6 nautics and Space Administration has been involved
7 in many defining events which have shaped the
8 course of human history and demonstrated to the
9 world the character of the people of the United
10 States;

11 (3) among the many firsts by the National Aer-
12 onautics and Space Administration are that—

13 (A) on December 6, 1958, the United
14 States launched Pioneer 3, the first United
15 States satellite to ascend to an altitude of
16 63,580 miles;

17 (B) on March 3, 1959, the United States
18 sent Pioneer 4 to the Moon, successfully mak-
19 ing the first United States lunar flyby;

20 (C) on April 1, 1960, the United States
21 launched TIROS 1, the first successful mete-
22 orological satellite, observing Earth's weather;

23 (D) on May 5, 1961, Freedom 7, carrying
24 Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr., was the first
25 American space flight involving human beings;

1 (E) on February 20, 1962, John Glenn be-
2 came the first American to circle the Earth,
3 making 3 orbits in his Friendship 7 Mercury
4 spacecraft;

5 (F) on December 14, 1962, Mariner 2 be-
6 came the first spacecraft to commit a successful
7 planetary flyby (Venus);

8 (G) on April 6, 1965, the United States
9 launched Intelsat I (also known as Early Bird
10 1), the first commercial satellite (communica-
11 tions), into geostationary orbit;

12 (H) on June 3 through 7, 1965, the sec-
13 ond piloted Gemini mission, Gemini IV, stayed
14 aloft for 4 days, and astronaut Edward H.
15 White II performed the first EVA or
16 “spacewalk” by an American;

17 (I) on June 2, 1966, Surveyor 1 became
18 the first American spacecraft to soft-land on
19 the Moon;

20 (J) on May 31, 1971, the United States
21 launched Mariner 9, the first mission to orbit
22 another planet (Mars) beginning November 13,
23 1971;

24 (K) on April 12, 1981, the National Aero-
25 nautics and Space Administration launched the

1 Space Shuttle Columbia on the first flight of
2 the Space Transportation System (STS-1);

3 (L) on June 18, 1983, the National Aero-
4 nautics and Space Administration launched
5 Space Shuttle Challenger (STS-7) carrying 3
6 mission specialists, including Sally K. Ride, the
7 first woman astronaut;

8 (M) in another historic mission, 2 months
9 later, the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
10 ministration launched STS-8 carrying the first
11 black American astronaut, Guion S. Bluford;
12 and

13 (N) on July 23, 1999, the Space Shuttle
14 Columbia's 26th flight was led by Air Force
15 Col. Eileen Collins, the first woman to com-
16 mand a Shuttle mission;

17 (4) on April 9, 1959, the National Aeronautics
18 and Space Administration unveiled the Mercury as-
19 tronaut corps, 7 men with "the right stuff": John
20 H. Glenn, Jr., Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Alan B.
21 Shepard, Jr., M. Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Coo-
22 per, Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, and Donald K.
23 "Deke" Slayton;

24 (5) on May 25, 1961, President John F. Ken-
25 nedy, reflecting the highest aspirations of the Amer-

1 ican people, proclaimed: “I believe this Nation
2 should commit itself to achieving the goal, before
3 this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon
4 and returning him safely to Earth. No single space
5 project in this period will be more impressive to
6 mankind, or more important in the long-range explo-
7 ration of space; and none will be so difficult or ex-
8 pensive to accomplish.”;

9 (6) on September 19, 1961, the National Aero-
10 nautics and Space Administration announced that
11 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
12 center dedicated to human space flight would be
13 built in Houston, Texas;

14 (7) on February 17, 1973, the Manned Space-
15 craft Center in Houston was renamed the Lyndon
16 B. Johnson Space Center;

17 (8) on December 21, 1968, Apollo 8 took off
18 atop a Saturn V booster from the Kennedy Space
19 Center for a historic mission to orbit the Moon;

20 (9) as Apollo 8 traveled outward, the crew fo-
21 cused a portable television camera on Earth and for
22 the first time humanity saw its home from afar, a
23 tiny, lovely, and fragile “blue marble” hanging in
24 the blackness of space;

1 (10) this transmission and viewing of Earth
2 from a distance was an enormously significant ac-
3 complishment and united the Nation at a time when
4 American society was in crisis over Vietnam, race re-
5 lations, urban problems, and a host of other difficul-
6 ties;

7 (11) on July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts
8 Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin made the
9 first lunar landing mission while Michael Collins or-
10 bited overhead in the Apollo command module;

11 (12) Armstrong set foot on the surface of the
12 Moon, telling the millions of listeners that it was
13 “one small step for a man, one giant leap for man-
14 kind”, and Aldrin soon followed and planted an
15 American flag, but omitted claiming the land for the
16 United States, as had routinely been done during
17 European exploration of the Americas;

18 (13) the two Moon walkers left behind an
19 American flag and a plaque bearing the inscription:
20 “Here Men From The Planet Earth First Set Foot
21 Upon the Moon. Jul. 1969 A.D. We Came in Peace
22 for All Mankind.”;

23 (14) on April 24, 1990, the Hubble Space Tele-
24 scope was launched into space aboard the STS-31
25 mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery, and since

1 then, the Hubble has revolutionized astronomy, while
2 expanding our knowledge of the universe and inspir-
3 ing millions of scientists, students, and members of
4 the public with its unprecedented deep and clear im-
5 ages of space;

6 (15) on July 4, 1997, the Mars Pathfinder
7 landed on Mars and on January 29, 1998, an Inter-
8 national Space Station agreement among 15 coun-
9 tries met in Washington, DC, to sign agreements to
10 establish the framework for cooperation among the
11 partners on the design, development, operation, and
12 utilization of the Space Station;

13 (16) the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
14 ministration's stunning achievements over the last
15 50 years have been won for all mankind at great
16 cost and sacrifice; in the quest to explore the uni-
17 verse, many National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
18 istration employees have lost their lives, including
19 the crews of Apollo 1, the Space Shuttle Challenger,
20 and the Space Shuttle Columbia;

21 (17) the success of the United States space ex-
22 ploration program in the 20th Century augurs well
23 for its continued leadership in the 21st Century,
24 such leadership being attributable to the remarkable
25 and indispensable partnership between the National

1 Aeronautics and Space Administration and its 10
2 space and research centers, including—

3 (A) from small spacecraft to supercom-
4 puters, science missions and payloads to ther-
5 mal protection systems, information technology
6 to aerospace, the Ames Research Center in
7 California’s Silicon Valley, which provides prod-
8 ucts, technologies, and services that enable
9 NASA missions and expand human knowledge;

10 (B) the Dryden Flight Research Center,
11 the leading center for innovative flight research;

12 (C) the Glenn Research Center, which de-
13 velops power, propulsion, and communication
14 technologies for space flight systems and aero-
15 nautics research;

16 (D) the Goddard Space Flight Center,
17 which specializes in research to expand knowl-
18 edge on the Earth and its environment, the
19 solar system, and the universe through observa-
20 tions from space;

21 (E) the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the
22 leading center for robotic exploration of the
23 solar system;

24 (F) the Johnson Space Center, which man-
25 ages the development, testing, production, and

1 delivery of all United States human spacecraft
2 and all human spacecraft-related functions;

3 (G) the Kennedy Space Center, the gate-
4 way to the Universe and world leader in pre-
5 paring and launching missions around the
6 Earth and beyond;

7 (H) the Langley Research Center, which
8 continues to forge new frontiers in aviation and
9 space research for aerospace, atmospheric
10 sciences, and technology commercialization to
11 improve the way the world lives;

12 (I) the Marshall Space Flight Center, a
13 world leader in developing space transportation
14 and propulsion systems that accelerate explo-
15 ration and scientific discovery, including the
16 Michoud Assembly Facility, which has been a
17 world-class facility since 1961 for fabrication of
18 large space structures, including the Saturn V
19 and the Space Shuttle External Tank, and
20 which will have a critical role in the Constella-
21 tion program, including manufacturing major
22 pieces of the Orion crew capsule, the Ares I
23 upper stage, and the Ares V core stage; and

24 (J) the Stennis Space Center, which is re-
25 sponsible for rocket propulsion testing and for

1 partnering with industry to develop and imple-
2 ment remote sensing technology;

3 (18) the United States should pay tribute to
4 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
5 and to its successful partnerships with the space and
6 research centers, by minting and issuing a com-
7 memorative silver dollar coin; and

8 (19) the surcharge proceeds from the sale of a
9 commemorative coin would generate valuable fund-
10 ing for the National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
11 istration Families Assistance Fund, for the purposes
12 of providing need-based financial assistance to the
13 families of any National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
14 ministration personnel who lose their lives as a re-
15 sult of injuries suffered in the performance of their
16 official duties, and for other worthy and important
17 purposes.

18 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

19 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In commemoration of the
20 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aer-
21 onautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of the
22 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
23 retary”) shall mint and issue the following coins:

24 (1) \$50 GOLD COINS.—Not more than 50,000
25 \$50 gold coins, which shall—

1 (A) weigh 33.931 grams;

2 (B) have a diameter of 32.7 millimeters;

3 and

4 (C) contain 1 troy ounce of fine gold.

5 (2) \$1 SILVER COINS.—Not more than 300,000

6 \$1 coins of each of the 9 designs specified in section

7 4(a)(3)(B), which shall—

8 (A) weigh 26.73 grams;

9 (B) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

10 (C) contain 90 percent silver and 10 per-

11 cent copper.

12 (b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this

13 Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of

14 title 31, United States Code.

15 (c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section

16 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted

17 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

18 (d) MINTAGE LEVEL LIMIT.—Notwithstanding the

19 mintage level limit described under section

20 5112(m)(2)(A)(ii) of title 31, United States Code, the Sec-

21 retary may mint and issue not more than 300,000 of each

22 of the nine \$1 coins authorized to be minted under this

23 Act.

24 **SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.**

25 (a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins
2 minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the 50
3 years of exemplary and unparalleled achievements of
4 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

5 (2) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On
6 each coin minted under this Act, there shall be—

7 (A) a designation of the value of the coin;

8 (B) an inscription of the year “2011”; and

9 (C) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”,
10 “In God We Trust”, “United States of Amer-
11 ica”, and “E Pluribus Unum”, and such other
12 inscriptions as the Secretary may determine to
13 be appropriate for the designs of the coins.

14 (3) COIN IMAGES.—

15 (A) \$50 COINS.—

16 (i) OBVERSE.—The obverse of the
17 \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear
18 an image of the sun.

19 (ii) REVERSE.—The reverse of the
20 \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear
21 a design emblematic of the sacrifice of the
22 United States astronauts who lost their
23 lives in the line of duty over the course of
24 the space program.

1 (iii) HIGH RELIEF.—The design and
2 inscriptions on the obverse and reverse of
3 the \$50 coins issued under this Act shall
4 be in high relief.

5 (B) \$1 COINS.—

6 (i) OBVERSE.—The obverse of the \$1
7 coins issued under this Act shall bear nine
8 different designs, each of which shall con-
9 sist of an image of one of the nine planets
10 of the solar system, including Earth.

11 (ii) REVERSE.—The reverse of the \$1
12 coins issued under this Act shall bear dif-
13 ferent designs, each of which shall be em-
14 blematic of the contributions of the re-
15 search and space centers, subject to the
16 following requirements:

17 (I) EARTH COIN.—The reverse of
18 the \$1 coins issued under this Act
19 which bear an image of the Earth on
20 the obverse shall bear images emblem-
21 atic of, and honoring, the discoveries
22 and missions of the National Aero-
23 nautics and Space Administration, the
24 Mercury, Gemini, and Space Shuttle
25 missions and other manned Earth-or-

1 biting missions, and the Apollo mis-
2 sions to the Moon.

3 (II) JUPITER COIN.—The reverse
4 of the \$1 coins issued under this Act
5 which bear an image of the planet Ju-
6 piter on the obverse shall include a
7 scientifically accurate depiction of the
8 Galilean moon Europa and depict
9 both a past and future mission to Eu-
10 ropa.

11 (III) SATURN COIN.—The reverse
12 of the \$1 coins issued under this Act
13 which bear an image of the planet
14 Saturn on the obverse shall include a
15 scientifically accurate depiction of the
16 moon Titan and depict both a past
17 and a future mission to Titan.

18 (IV) PLUTO (AND OTHER DWARF
19 PLANETS) COIN.—The reverse of the
20 \$1 coins issued under this Act which
21 bear an image of the planet Pluto on
22 the obverse shall include a design that
23 is emblematic of telescopic exploration
24 of deep space by the National Aero-
25 nautics and Space Administration and

1 the ongoing search for Earth-like
2 planets orbiting other stars.

3 (4) REALISTIC AND SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE
4 DEPICTIONS.—The images for the designs of coins
5 issued under this Act shall be selected on the basis
6 of the realism and scientific accuracy of the images
7 and on the extent to which the images are reminis-
8 cent of the dramatic and beautiful artwork on coins
9 of the so-called “Golden Age of Coinage” in the
10 United States, at the beginning of the Twentieth
11 Century, with the participation of such noted sculp-
12 tors and medallie artists as James Earle Fraser, Au-
13 gustus Saint-Gaudens, Victor David Brenner, Ad-
14 olph A. Weinman, Charles E. Barber, and George T.
15 Morgan.

16 (b) SELECTION.—The design for the coins minted
17 under this Act shall be—

18 (1) selected by the Secretary, after consultation
19 with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics
20 and Space Administration and the Commission of
21 Fine Arts; and

22 (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coin Advisory
23 Committee.

1 **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.**

2 (a) QUALITY OF COINS.—Coins minted under this
3 Act shall be issued in proof quality only.

4 (b) MINT FACILITY.—Only 1 facility of the United
5 States Mint may be used to strike any particular combina-
6 tion of denomination and quality of the coins minted under
7 this Act.

8 (c) PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.—Notwithstanding any
9 other provision of law, the Secretary—

10 (1) may accept orders for the coins authorized
11 under this Act during the period beginning on Janu-
12 ary 1, 2011 and ending on December 31, 2011; and

13 (2) may mint and issue such coins required to
14 fulfill such orders during the period beginning on
15 January 1, 2011 and ending on December 31, 2011.

16 (d) EXCEPTION TO PROGRAM LIMITATION.—Not-
17 withstanding any other provision of law, the minting or
18 issuance of coins under this Act in 2011 shall not—

19 (1) preclude the Secretary from including a sur-
20 charge on the issuance of any other commemorative
21 coin minted or issued in 2011; and

22 (2) be counted against the annual 2 commemo-
23 rative coin program minting and issuance limitation
24 under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States
25 Code.

1 (e) ISSUANCE OF GOLD COINS.—Each gold coin
2 minted under this Act may be issued only as part of a
3 complete set with one of each of the nine \$1 coins minted
4 under this Act.

5 **SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.**

6 (a) SALE PRICE.—The coins issued under this Act
7 shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum
8 of—

9 (1) the face value of the coins;

10 (2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with
11 respect to such coins; and

12 (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins
13 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,
14 overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

15 (b) PREPAID ORDERS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall accept
17 prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act
18 before the issuance of such coins.

19 (2) DISCOUNT.—Sale prices with respect to pre-
20 paid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a rea-
21 sonable discount.

22 (c) PRESENTATION.—In addition to the issuance of
23 coins under this Act in such other methods of presentation
24 as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Sec-
25 retary shall provide, as a sale option, a presentation case

1 which displays the \$50 gold coin in the center, surrounded
2 by the \$1 silver coins in elliptical orbits. All such presen-
3 tation cases shall bear a plaque with appropriate inscrip-
4 tions that include the names and dates of the spacecraft
5 missions on which United States astronauts lost their lives
6 over the course of the space program and the names of
7 such astronauts.

8 **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—All sales of coins minted under
10 this Act shall include a surcharge as follows:

11 (1) A surcharge of \$50 per coin for the \$50
12 coin.

13 (2) A surcharge of \$10 per coin for the \$1 coin.

14 (3) A surcharge of \$1 per coin for any bronze
15 duplicate minted under section 8.

16 (b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of
17 title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by
18 the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act
19 shall be promptly distributed as follows:

20 (1) The first \$4,000,000 available for distribu-
21 tion under this section, to the NASA Family Assist-
22 ance Fund, for the purpose of providing need-based
23 financial assistance to the families of NASA per-
24 sonnel who lose their lives as a result of injuries suf-
25 fered in the performance of their official duties.

1 (2) Of amounts available for distribution after
2 the payment under paragraph (1), $\frac{1}{2}$ of the next
3 \$1,000,000 to each of the following:

4 (A) The Dr. Ronald E. McNair Edu-
5 cational (D.R.E.M.E.) Science Literacy Foun-
6 dation for the purposes of improving and
7 strengthening the process of teaching and
8 learning science, math, and technology at all
9 educational levels, elementary through college
10 through the promotion of innovative educational
11 programs.

12 (B) The Challenger Center for Space
13 Science Education, for the purposes of creating
14 positive learning experiences using space science
15 as a theme that raise student expectations of
16 success, fostering a long-term interest in mathe-
17 matics, science, and technology, and motivating
18 students to pursue careers in these fields.

19 (3) The remainder of the amounts available for
20 distribution after the payments under paragraphs
21 (1) and (2), to the Secretary of the Smithsonian In-
22 stitution for the preservation, maintenance, and dis-
23 play of space artifacts at the National Air and Space
24 Museum (including the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Cen-
25 ter).

1 (c) AUDITS.—The NASA Family Assistance Fund,
2 the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational Science Literacy
3 Foundation, the Challenger Center for Space Science Edu-
4 cation, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
5 shall be subject to the audit requirements of section
6 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with regard
7 to the amounts received under subsection (b).

8 **SEC. 8. BRONZE DUPLICATES.**

9 The Secretary may strike and sell bronze duplicates
10 of the \$50 gold coins authorized under this Act, at a price
11 determined by the Secretary to be appropriate. Such dupli-
12 cates shall not be considered to be United States coins
13 and shall not be legal tender.

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