

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3990

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to John H. Johnson in recognition
of his outstanding contributions to the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Mr. RUSH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on Financial Services

A BILL

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to John H. Johnson
in recognition of his outstanding contributions 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) John H. Johnson published the first edition
6 of the Negro Digest in 1942, having conceived of the
7 idea while working at the Supreme Life Insurance
8 Company.

1 (2) This publication covered African-American
2 history, literature, arts, and cultural issues and
3 reached a circulation of 50,000 within six months.

4 (3) Renamed to Black World, the publication
5 reached a circulation of more than 100,000 sub-
6 scribers at its peak.

7 (4) Johnson's later creation, Ebony magazine,
8 supplanted this record in selling out its initial run
9 of 25,000 printed copies and at its height had
10 2,300,000 subscribers.

11 (5) Through Ebony magazine, Johnson pro-
12 vided insight into the African-American community
13 by reporting on issues such as "the white problem
14 in America", African-American militancy, crimes by
15 African-Americans against African-Americans, civil
16 rights legislation, freedom rides and marches, and
17 other aspects of segregation and discrimination.

18 (6) Johnson worked to ensure that the con-
19 tributions of African-Americans to the United States
20 were documented by trained historians who were
21 brought on to the magazine's staff.

22 (7) Striving to show positive images of African-
23 Americans, Johnson featured African-American
24 models in the magazine's advertisements, and a con-

1 certed effort was made to show positive aspects of
2 African-American life and culture.

3 (8) Johnson's quest to serve African-American
4 readers continued in subsequent years by launching
5 four other magazines entitled Tan, Jet, African
6 American Stars, and Ebony Jr., a children's maga-
7 zine.

8 (9) Johnson later expanded his enterprise when
9 becoming chairman and chief executive officer of the
10 Supreme Life Insurance Company, developing a line
11 of cosmetics, owning three radio stations, starting a
12 book publishing company, and a television produc-
13 tion company.

14 (10) Invited by the United States Government
15 to participate in several international missions,
16 Johnson accompanied the Vice President of the
17 United States on a mission to Russia and Poland in
18 1959, and was appointed to be a Special Amba-
19 sador to represent the United States at the inde-
20 pendence ceremonies in the Ivory Coast in 1961 and
21 Kenya in 1963.

22 (11) In 1966, Johnson was honored with the
23 National Association for the Advancement of Col-
24 ored People's Spingarn Medal for his contributions
25 to improving race relations in the United States.

1 (12) In 1966, The Horatio Alger Association of
2 Distinguished Americans awarded Johnson the Ho-
3 ratio Alger Award in recognition of his outstanding
4 work as a dedicated community leader.

5 (13) In 1972, Johnson was named Publisher of
6 the Year by the Magazine Publishers Association, an
7 industry association for consumer magazines.

8 (14) In 1993, the Wall Street Journal awarded
9 Johnson with the Dow Jones Entrepreneurial Excel-
10 lence Award.

11 (15) In 1994, Johnson was awarded the Center
12 for Communication's Communication Award, on the
13 occasion of Ebony's 50th anniversary.

14 (16) In 1996, President William Clinton award-
15 ed Johnson the Presidential Medal of Freedom
16 which was followed in 1997 by Johnson's induction
17 into the Junior Achievement National Business Hall
18 of Fame.

19 (17) In 2001, Johnson was inducted into the
20 Arkansas Business Hall of Fame.

21 (18) Among his numerous awards and honors,
22 Johnson has been awarded honorary doctorates by
23 the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Harvard
24 University, the University of Southern California,

1 Carnegie Mellon University, Eastern Michigan Uni-
2 versity, and Wayne State University.

3 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

4 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
5 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
6 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
7 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
8 of appropriate design to John H. Johnson in recognition
9 of his outstanding work, leadership, and service.

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

16 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

22 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

23 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national
24 medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United
25 States Code.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
2 **SALE.**

3 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is
4 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
5 Public Enterprise Fund, such amounts as may be nec-
6 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant
7 to this Act.

8 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the
9 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
10 3 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
11 Enterprise Fund.

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