

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5309

To posthumously award a congressional gold medal to Constance Baker Motley, in recognition of her enduring contributions and service to the United States.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. AMO, Mr. AMODEI of Nevada, Ms. BALINT, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARBARINO, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HIMES, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. IVEY, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. LAWLER, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIEU, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEAL, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mrs. TORRES of California, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. ROSS, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. RYAN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. SIMPSON, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. VALADAO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

# A BILL

To posthumously award a congressional gold medal to Constance Baker Motley, in recognition of her enduring contributions and service 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Congressional Tribute  
5 to Constance Baker Motley Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds the following:

8            (1) Constance Baker Motley was born in 1921,  
9            in New Haven, Connecticut, the daughter of immi-  
10            grants from the Caribbean island of Nevis.

11            (2) In 1943, Constance Baker Motley grad-  
12            uated from New York University with a Bachelor of  
13            Arts degree in economics.

14            (3) Upon receiving a law degree from Columbia  
15            University in 1946, Constance Baker Motley became  
16            a staff attorney at the National Association for the  
17            Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and  
18            Educational Fund, Inc. (in this Act referred to as  
19            the “LDF”), and fought tirelessly for 2 decades  
20            alongside Thurgood Marshall and other leading civil

1 rights lawyers to dismantle segregation throughout  
2 the United States.

3 (4) Constance Baker Motley was the only fe-  
4 male attorney on the LDF legal team that won the  
5 landmark desegregation case, *Brown v. Board of*  
6 *Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

7 (5) Constance Baker Motley argued 10 major  
8 civil rights cases before the Supreme Court, winning  
9 all but one, including the case brought on behalf of  
10 James Meredith challenging the refusal of the Uni-  
11 versity of Mississippi to admit him.

12 (6) Constance Baker Motley's only loss before  
13 the United States Supreme Court was in *Swain v.*  
14 *Alabama*, 380 U.S. 202 (1965), a case in which the  
15 Supreme Court refused to proscribe race-based pe-  
16 remptory challenges in cases involving African-Amer-  
17 ican defendants, and which was later reversed in  
18 *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79 (1986), on  
19 grounds that were largely asserted by Constance  
20 Baker Motley in the *Swain* case.

21 (7) In 1964, Constance Baker Motley became  
22 the first African-American woman elected to the  
23 New York State Senate.

24 (8) In 1965, Constance Baker Motley became  
25 the first African-American woman, and the first

1 woman, to serve as president of the Borough of  
2 Manhattan.

3 (9) Constance Baker Motley, in her capacity as  
4 an elected public official in New York, continued to  
5 fight for civil rights, dedicating herself to the revital-  
6 ization of the inner city and improvement of urban  
7 public schools and housing.

8 (10) In 1966, Constance Baker Motley was ap-  
9 pointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a judge  
10 on the United States District Court for the Southern  
11 District of New York.

12 (11) The appointment of Constance Baker Mot-  
13 ley made her the first African-American woman, and  
14 only the fifth woman, appointed and confirmed for  
15 a Federal judgeship.

16 (12) In 1982, Constance Baker Motley was ele-  
17 vated to Chief Judge of the United States District  
18 Court for the Southern District of New York, the  
19 largest Federal trial court in the United States.

20 (13) Constance Baker Motley assumed senior  
21 status in 1986, and continued serving on the United  
22 States District Court for the Southern District of  
23 New York with distinction for nearly 2 decades.

24 (14) Constance Baker Motley passed away on  
25 September 28, 2005, and is survived by her son,

1 Joel W. Motley III, 3 grandchildren, and nieces and  
2 nephews in Connecticut and in other States.

3 (15) September 14, 2021, was the 100th anni-  
4 versary of the birth of Constance Baker Motley.

5 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

6 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President  
7 pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
8 of Representatives are authorized to make appropriate ar-  
9 rangements for the posthumous award, on behalf of Con-  
10 gress, of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemo-  
11 ration of Constance Baker Motley, in recognition of her  
12 enduring contributions and service to the United States.

13 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of the  
15 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of  
16 the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Sec-  
17 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-  
18 blems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by  
19 the Secretary.

20 (2) IMAGE.—The emblems, devices, and inscrip-  
21 tions determined by the Secretary shall include an  
22 image of Constance Baker Motley and an inscription  
23 of the name of Constance Baker Motley.

24 (c) PRESENTATION.—With respect to the award de-  
25 scribed under subsection (a), the award shall be presented

1 to Constance Baker Motley's son, Joel Motley III, and her  
2 niece, Constance Royster.

3 (d) DISPOSITION OF MEDAL.—Following the award  
4 of the gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal  
5 shall be given to Joel Motley III.

6 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

7 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
8 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price  
9 sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, mate-  
10 rials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

11 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—All medals struck under this  
13 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title  
14 31, United States Code.

15 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
16 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
17 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
18 items.

19 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**  
20 **SALE.**

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

1           (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
2 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section  
3 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public  
4 Enterprise Fund.

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