

Today we should rise and honor the memory of both the Texas Western College team and their coach, Don Haskins, who led them to a National Championship, and in doing so advanced the cause of civil rights and decreased segregation in athletics.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 668 to give recognition where recognition is long overdue. With this resolution, Congress applauds the groundbreaking significance of the 1966 NCAA Division I men's basketball championship in which Texas Western upset the heavily favored University of Kentucky. That year, the Miners had an all-Black starting line-up, a first in a national championship competition that helped change the perception of Black athletes.

Texas Western Coach Don Haskins and his players may not have set out to change history, but they did. The 1966 championship game helped pave the way for integration of athletics, opening sports to the civil rights movement, often being dubbed, the Brown v. Board of Education of sports. The next season, the Southwest Conference was integrated, and in 1967–68, Vanderbilt broke the Southeast Conference color barrier.

Unfortunately, it has taken decades before Coach Haskins and his players' achievements have been recognized. In 1966 there were no trips to the White House or appearances on the Ed Sullivan show, both customary for national champions. The team did not even receive national championship rings until their 20-year reunion in 1986.

It is time to recognize the profound contribution to the civil rights movement that this game spurred, and to recognize the 1966 NCAA Division I men's basketball champions, the Texas Western Miners. I urge my colleagues in joining me in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 1966 Texas Western Men's Basketball Team. Their NCAA championship victory over Kentucky forever changed college athletics.

Even though it had been over a decade since Brown v. Board of Education, many colleges had lagged behind on implementing integration into their athletics programs. In 1966, college basketball players were often recruited on the basis of their skin color rather than playing ability. Texas Western coach Bob Haskins did not succumb to pressures to start his White players. He simply played his best players regardless of skin color.

This resulted in the first time an all-Black starting line-up participated in a major athletic championship contest. The impact was felt throughout the country when little-known Texas Western upset legendary all-White Kentucky.

Perhaps most important in this victory was the stereotypes and misconceptions that were broken down. For many, the assumption remained that Black players would not be skilled or smart enough to successfully compete against White players. Bob Haskins and Texas Western proved on a national stage that Black players can win and are as smart and talented as their White counterparts.

The 1966 Texas Western men's basketball team opened the doors for schools that had stalled in implementing integration policies into their athletics programs; breaking down barriers and forever changing college athletics.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Congressman SILVESTRE REYES for offering House Resolution 668, a resolution which celebrates this year's 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship.

The year of 1966 marked a number of "firsts" by African Americans. The Honorable Robert C. Weaver became the first African American Cabinet member with his appointment as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Edward Brooke became the first popularly elected African American to the United States Senate, and it also marked the first time a collegiate basketball team, the Texas Western Miners, sporting an all African American line-up won the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship.

What made this victory important, and what we are commemorating here today, is not the fact that a team starting all African American student athletes beat a team of all White student athletes. We commemorate rather, the closing of one more chapter of segregation and bigotry to a new chapter where we judge an individual on the content of their character and qualifications and not on the color of their skin.

The Texas Western Miners, in their victory over the University of Kentucky Wildcats, opened up numerous opportunities for student athletes of all races and creeds to attend college, participate in sports, and become eligible for athletic scholarships. The fact that the impact that this victory did so much to change the perception of African-American athletes and to speed the desegregation of intercollegiate sports, has lead many people to label this historic event as the Brown v. Board of Education of athletics.

Finally, any tribute to the Minors would be incomplete without acknowledging their coach, Don Haskins. Coach Haskins is to be commended for his continued commitment to build on the foundation of integration that he inherited at Texas Western—the first college in a Southern state to integrate its athletic teams—and for his courage in facing collegiate basketball's racial issues directly.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship. The title game had a profound impact on the state of racial integration in sports and civil rights in America.

On March 16, 1966, Coach Don Haskins led the first ever all-Black starting lineup to play in a major championship contest in a victory over the heavily-favored Kentucky Wildcats.

Coach Haskins played high school basketball in Enid, Oklahoma, and in college at Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State). He then became a successful high school basketball coach in Texas. Haskins was a coach at Dumas High School before becoming the head of the men's team at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas at El Paso, in 1961.

Haskins coached the Miners to 33 winning seasons over the course of his career with the Miners. He won seven Western Athletic Conference championships, four Western Athletic Conference tournament titles, and made 21 post-season appearances. He established a proud winning tradition in the community of El Paso that still exists today. Coach Haskins was voted in to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1997.

The Texas Western Miners' victory was a watershed moment for diversity in college athletics. It helped expand the civil rights movement into the realm of sports. On January 13, 2006, Walt Disney Pictures released *Glory Road*, which tells the story of the historic 1966 season and pays tribute to the dedication and bravery of Coach Haskins.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I also yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 668, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

LOUIS BRAILLE BICENTENNIAL—BRAILLE LITERACY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2872) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2872

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Louis Braille, who invented the Braille method for reading and writing by the blind that has allowed millions of blind people to be literate participants in their societies, was born in Coupvray, a small village near Paris, on January 4, 1809.

(2) Braille lost his sight at the age of three after injuring himself with an awl in the shop of his father Rene, a maker of harnesses and other objects of leather.

(3) A youth who was both intelligent and creative and was blessed with dedicated parents, a thoughtful local priest and an energetic local schoolteacher, Braille adapted to the situation and attended local school with other youths of his age, an unheard-of practice for a blind child of the period.

(4) At the age of 10, when his schooling otherwise would have stopped, Braille—with the aid of the priest and schoolteacher—was

given a scholarship by a local nobleman and went to Paris to attend the Royal Institute for Blind Children where he became the youngest pupil.

(5) At the school, most instruction was oral but Braille found there were books for the blind—large, expensive-to-produce books in which the text was of large letters embossed upon the page.

(6) Soon Braille had read all 14 books in the school, but thirsted for more.

(7) A captain in Napoleon's army, Charles Barbier de la Serre, had invented "night writing", a method for communicating on the battlefield amidst the thick smoke of combat or at night without lighting a match—which would aid enemy gunners—that used dots and dashes that were felt and interpreted with the fingers, and later adapted the method for use by the blind, calling it Sonography because it represented words by sounds, rather than spelling.

(8) Braille adopted the Sonography method instantly but soon recognized that the basis in sound and the large number of dots—as many as 12—used to represent words was too cumbersome.

(9) By the age of 15, and using a blunt awl, the same sort of tool that had blinded him, Braille had developed what is essentially modern Braille, a code that uses no more than 6 dots in a "cell" of 2 columns of 3 dots each to represent each letter and contains a system of punctuation and of "contractions" to speed writing and reading.

(10) In contrast to the bulky books consisting of large embossed letters, Braille books can contain as many as 1000 characters or contractions on a standard 11-by-12-inch page of heavy paper, and to this day Braille can be punched with an awl-like "stylus" into paper held in a metal "slate" that is very similar to the ones that Louis Braille adapted from Barbier's original "night writing" devices.

(11) Also a talented organist who supported himself by giving concerts, Braille went on to develop the Braille representation of music and in 1829 published the first-ever Braille book, a manual about how to read and write music.

(12) 8 years later, in 1837, Braille followed that publication with another book detailing a system of representation of mathematics.

(13) Braille's talents were quickly recognized, and at 17 he was made the first blind apprentice teacher at the school, where he taught algebra, grammar, music, and geography.

(14) He and two blind classmates, his friends who probably were the first people to learn to read and write Braille, later became the first three blind full professors at the school.

(15) However, despite the fact that many blind people enthusiastically adopted the system of writing and reading, there was great skepticism among sighted people about the real usefulness of Braille's code, and even at the Royal Institute, it was not taught until after his death on January 6, 1852.

(16) Braille did not start to spread widely until 1868 when a group of British men—later to become known as the Royal National Institute for the Blind—began publicizing and teaching the system.

(17) Braille did not become the official and sole method of reading and writing for blind United States citizens until the 20th Century.

(18) Helen Keller, a Braille reader of another generation, said: "Braille has been a most precious aid to me in many ways. It made my going to college possible—it was the only method by which I could take notes on lectures. All my examination papers were copied for me in this system. I use Braille as a spider uses its web—to catch thoughts that

flit across my mind for speeches, messages and manuscripts."

(19) While rapid technological advances in the 20th Century have greatly aided the blind in many ways by speeding access to information, each advance has seen a commensurate drop in the teaching of Braille, to the point that only about 10 percent of blind students today are taught the system.

(20) However, for the blind not to know Braille is in itself a handicap, because literacy is the ability to read and the ability to write and the ability to do the two interactively.

(21) The National Federation of the Blind, the Nation's oldest membership organization consisting of blind members, has been a champion of the Braille code, of Braille literacy for all blind people and of the memory of Louis Braille, and continues its Braille literacy efforts today through its divisions emphasizing Braille literacy, emphasizing education of blind children and emphasizing employment of the blind.

(22) Braille literacy aids the blind in taking responsible and self-sufficient roles in society, such as employment: while 70 percent of the blind are unemployed, 85 percent of the employed blind are Braille-literate.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall mint and issue not more than 400,000 \$1 coins bearing the designs specified in section 4(a), each of which shall—

- (1) weigh 26.73 grams;
- (2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and
- (3) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the life and legacy of Louis Braille.

(2) OVERSE.—The design on the obverse shall bear a representation of the image of Louis Braille.

(3) REVERSE.—The design on the reverse shall emphasize Braille literacy and shall specifically include the word for Braille in Braille code (the Braille capital sign and the letters Brl) represented in a way that substantially complies with section 3 of Specification 800 of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress specifications for Braille, and is tactilely indiscernible from printed or written Braille.

(4) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin minted under this Act there shall be—

- (A) a designation of the value of the coin;
- (B) an inscription of the year "2009"; and
- (C) inscriptions of the words "Liberty", "In God We Trust", "United States of America", and "E Pluribus Unum".

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

- (1) selected by the Secretary after consultation with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Federation of the Blind; and
- (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee.

SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.

(a) QUALITY OF COINS.—Coins minted under this Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

(b) MINT FACILITY.—Only 1 facility of the United States Mint may be used to strike any particular quality of the coins minted under this Act.

(c) PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.—The Secretary may issue coins minted under this Act only during the 1-year period beginning on January 1, 2009.

SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.

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

- (1) the face value of the coins;
- (2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with respect to such coins; and
- (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

(b) BULK SALES.—The Secretary shall make bulk sales of the coins issued under this Act at a reasonable discount.

(c) PREPAID ORDERS.—

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

(2) DISCOUNT.—Sale prices with respect to prepaid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a reasonable discount.

SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.

(a) SURCHARGE REQUIRED.—All sales of coins under this Act shall include a surcharge of \$10 per coin.

(b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, all surcharges which are received by the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act shall be promptly paid by the Secretary to the the National Federation of the Blind to further its programs to promote Braille literacy.

(c) AUDITS.—The National Federation of the Blind shall be subject to the audit requirements of section 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with regard to the amounts received by the National Federation under subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin would result in the number of commemorative coin programs issued during such year to exceed the annual 2 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act). The Secretary of the Treasury may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2872, a bill designed to advance a nationwide Braille literacy campaign by honoring Louis Braille with a commemorative coin to be issued in 2009, the bicentennial year of his birth.

Louis Braille created the code of raised dots for reading and writing that bears his name and brings literacy, independence, and productivity to the blind.

Born in 1809, Louis Braille became blind due to an accident in his father's

workshop. By believing in the capacity of the blind to learn, Braille demonstrated an understanding of blindness that was extraordinarily enlightened and positive for the times in which he lived.

Blind people today would be far less likely to achieve the goals of independence and productive living without the positive contributions Louis Braille made and the example he set throughout his life. Today, blind members of society are teachers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, mathematicians and much, much more because of Louis Braille.

A means of achieving literacy is vital for everyone, including, of course, people who are blind. Therefore, effective use of Braille is one of the most essential skills for blind people to achieve success. Research shows that more than 90 percent of employed persons who are blind use Braille.

Effective use of Braille is as important to the blind as independent mobility, knowledge in the use of adaptive technology, and the core belief that equality, opportunity and security are truly possible for all people who are blind.

The Louis Braille Commemorative Coin will feature representation of the image of Louis Braille on one side and will include the word for Braille in actual Braille code on the other side. The inclusion of Braille code on the commemorative coin is a significant and historic aspect of this bill.

In addition, all sales of the Braille Commemorative Coin will include a surcharge of \$10 per coin, which will be distributed to the National Federation of the Blind to promote Braille literacy. As a condition of receiving the proceeds from this surcharge, the National Federation of the Blind will be subject to annual audits to ensure that these proceeds, of course, are being spent for the authorized purpose and will be required to raise matching funds from private sources.

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If all the coins authorized under this bill are sold, the surcharges could generate up to \$4 million plus the matching \$4 million that the National Federation of the Blind would be required to raise privately. That is potentially \$8 million to promote Braille literacy for all people in the country who are in need of Braille literacy. The Nation's blind would greatly benefit by this investment in Braille literacy.

The National Federation of the Blind has committed to raising their share of these funds and promoting Braille literacy with the proceeds. Based on our work with the NFB in the past, I know they are up to this task. I worked very closely with the NFB on the Help America Vote Act, Mr. HOYER and I both did, and Senators DODD and BOND and MCCONNELL in the Senate, in order to ensure that voting booths were equipped to allow the blind to vote independently without outside assistance. Their grass-roots advocacy and

unyielding support on that bill helped that dream become a reality for the Nation's blind.

Again, with this bill, the National Federation of the Blind put their grass-roots network into action to build overwhelming support for this commemorative coin. I'm confident this same grass-roots network will raise the matching funds required and effectively promote Braille literacy on a nationwide basis with the proceeds from this coin's surcharge.

The National Federation of the Blind currently fosters Braille literacy in a number of ways: from mentoring programs, in which experienced Braille readers as volunteers teach and encourage novices, to publishing instructions for schoolchildren, to research in effective methods of teaching and learning Braille, to one-on-one Braille instruction in residential training centers. Literacy in Braille is emphasized throughout its programs and services as an essential tool for blind persons to participate successfully in modern society.

The Federation emphatically links competence in the basic skills of blindness, like Braille, to its broader understanding of blindness, a condition feared above most others by society. When blindness occurs, the federation seeks, through its nationwide membership, to reach individuals, children, or adults who experience sight loss to convey the message that while blindness is not sought by anyone, obviously, everyone can successfully handle lack of sight with proper training and alternative skills, combined with a can-do attitude.

But even with that effort, only about 10 percent of blind children are taught Braille. Issuance of the Louis Braille commemorative coin can aid that effort, forming a springboard for a nationwide Braille literacy campaign drawing all these strands together and focusing the joint energy of thousands of volunteers powered by a big idea, resulting in high-profile attention to the literacy crisis amongst the blind while helping this broad volunteer corps to attract social attention to the positive thrust of the federation.

The story of Braille as a literacy tool and the story of the federation in emphasizing participation are parallel. Given the proper tools, we humans can overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles and achieve great things. Louis Braille, the man, did so. Hundreds of thousands of blind Americans do so every day. Hundreds of thousands of blind Americans could do so much more if they had the tool of literacy easily at hand and the can-do attitude to accompany it.

Honoring Louis Braille and promoting literacy for the blind will have lasting value for our society.

I want to thank Congressman BEN CARDIN for his cosponsorship of this important bill, and I want to thank over 300-some of our colleagues who have actually signed on to the bill, and

I appreciate the gentleman from Massachusetts being here today on this bill and all the input and work he has done on it.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to create the Louis Braille commemorative coin and help advance Braille literacy nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I agree with the words of the gentleman from Ohio.

First of all, let me express the regrets of our colleague from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) who was a major sponsor of this bill and who, I think, is the Representative of the National Federation of the Blind. He very much wanted to be here. He had a previous engagement, and he stayed here until the very last minute. I know he has a statement for the RECORD, but I did want to convey to people his having made an extraordinary effort to be here personally.

As I said, I agree with what the gentleman from Ohio said. I will say that I had inquired as to whether or not there might be some alternative financing arrangement. I appreciate this is a first-rate organization that makes enormous contributions. There are some other organizations that work in the field as well. But it was not possible to work anything out, and I did not want to stand in the way of this very important legislation, both in terms of commemorating Louis Braille and in terms of making the funding available.

So I give this legislation my support.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I rise in support of the proposed legislation of H.R. 2872, recognizing Louis Braille Bicentennial Braille literacy Commemorative Coin Act.

Louis Braille invented the Braille method for reading and writing by the blind that has allowed millions of blind people to be literate participants in their societies. Braille, who lost his sight at the age of three after injuring himself with an awl in the shop of his father, recognized that the basis in sound and the large number of dots as many as 12 used to represent words was too cumbersome. He developed a code that uses no more than 6 dots in a cell of 2 columns of 3 dots, each to represent each letter and contain a system of punctuation and of contractions to speed writing and reading. He later published another book detailing a system of representation of mathematics.

Braille's talents were quickly recognized and at 17, he was made the first blind apprentice teacher at the school, where he taught algebra, grammar, music and geography.

However, despite the fact that many blind people enthusiastically adopted the system of writing and reading, but there was great skepticism among sighted people about the real usefulness of Braille code. His literacy aids the blind in taking responsible and self-sufficient roles in society, such as employment. While 70% of the blind are unemployed, 85% of the employed blind are Braille-literate.

I propose that Secretary of the Treasury mint and issue no more than 400,000 one dollar coins bearing specific designs. The design

of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the life and legacy of Louis Braille and the design on the obverse shall bear a representation of the image of Louis Braille.

I support H.R. 2872 for many foregoing reasons and I urge my colleagues to follow suit.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2872, and I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, for his leadership on this bill. It has been a pleasure to work with him in advancing this important legislation. I also want to extend my appreciation to Chairman OXLEY and Ranking Member FRANK, of the Financial Services Committee, for their support.

This bipartisan bill celebrates the achievements of Louis Braille, who created a system of reading and writing for the blind that has gained widespread acceptance since his death more than one hundred fifty years ago. To mark the 200th anniversary of his birth in 1809, this bill authorizes the minting of \$1 coins bearing the image of Braille himself and emphasizing Braille literacy.

I want to particularly express my deep appreciation to the National Federation of the Blind for their vital advocacy for more than 1.3 million blind persons in the United States. Since its inception in 1940, the National Federation for the Blind has worked tirelessly to battle discrimination, increase public awareness, and develop and support technological advances.

The NFB also distributes *The Braille Monitor*, a monthly news publication, as well as online resources and a quarterly publication for the parents of blind children. With more than 50,000 members and affiliates in every state across America, NFB has led the way in demonstrating its ability to serve the interests of the blind population.

This bill holds special significance for me, as the National Federation of the Blind is headquartered in my Congressional district, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Dr. Marc Maurer, who has served as President of the National Federation of the Blind for 20 years, has shown exemplary leadership of this organization, as has the NFB's First Vice President, Joyce Scanlan, an active member since 1970. Sharon Maneki, President of the Maryland Chapter, has been instrumental in advancing the cause of blind persons throughout our state. I would also like to thank Jesse Hartle of the NFB for his hard work on behalf of the organization.

I am pleased to note that H.R. 2872 is co-sponsored by the entire Maryland delegation, as well as by more than 300 members of the House.

The NFB's mission statement declares that "the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misunderstanding and lack of information which exist." As part of this mission, the NFB has been campaigning to increase awareness of the Braille system of communication.

The Braille code became dominant in the United States during the 20th century, and it served as a gateway to education for the blind.

In recent years the Braille code has been in declining use among the blind population. It is currently taught to only about ten percent of blind students and is usually not taught at all to the elderly.

The NFB holds as one of its major goals the reintroduction of Braille into education for the

blind. Braille readers can read up to 400 words per minute, comparable to the speed of print readers. Braille is also essential for note-taking, mathematics and the study of foreign languages. Moreover, the computerization of Braille allows users to write much more rapidly than in the past.

Commemorating the contributions of Louis Braille is a worthy goal.

Increasing awareness of Braille and broadening opportunities for use as an educational tool are two other pivotal goals that this legislation will help achieve.

I want to thank my colleagues for their resounding support of H.R. 2872 and urge the House to help further the legacy of Louis Braille by voting for this bill.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. NEY.

Mr. Speaker, I confess I learned something reading this legislation. All of us know some blind people, and all of us, of course, see Braille writing in elevators and elsewhere as we move through our daily lives.

But sitting down and reading the story of the courage and the intelligence it must have taken for a young blind man 200 years ago in France to fight for an education for himself when many sighted kids his age weren't getting even a high school education, is remarkable. And doing it when there were very few books printed for the blind—those only with giant embossed letters—must have been excruciatingly slow and taken a huge amount of self-discipline. To have discovered and modified a method of communication used by the Army into something that could easily be reproduced and read—and more importantly written by the blind, which was not really the case with those giant embossed letters—was a truly revolutionary breakthrough.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, long before the amazing technology that we all take for granted, the blind who were taught to read and write Braille were able to live normal lives and participate fully in society. Still, and this is something else I learned, despite all the independence that reading and writing Braille confers on the blind, only about 10 percent of blind children are taught Braille. Thus, I support the provision in the bill that devotes income from surcharges on the sale of these coins to a Braille Literacy Program operated by the National Federation of the Blind. And I think it is important to note that the silver dollar coins that would be produced under this bill would all bear, on their reverse, a full-sized Braille abbreviation for Braille—the raised dots that form the letters BRL.

Mr. Speaker, this commemorative coin program, like all those that pass through the Financial Services Committee, proceeds at no cost to the taxpayer and requires the beneficiary, in this case the NFB, to raise from private sources an amount equal to or greater than the amount of surcharge income that will be received, and also demands strict post-disbursement audit process to ensure that the funds are used for their statutorily intended purpose. In this case, I have no doubt that the NFB can raise the matching funds and will use the income to really very effectively raise the profile of Braille literacy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, noting that 302 Members of the House have co-sponsored this bill, I urge its immediate passage.

I also submit for the RECORD the following exchange of correspondence:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2006.

Hon. WILLIAM M. THOMAS,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Longworth House
Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I am writing concerning H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," which was introduced in the House and referred to the Committee on Financial Services on June 13, 2005. It is my expectation that this bill be scheduled for floor consideration in the near future.

As you know, section 7 of the bill establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill. I acknowledge your committee's jurisdictional interest in such surcharges as revenue matters. However, I request that your committee forego action on H.R. 2872 in order to allow the bill to come to the floor expeditiously. I appreciate your cooperation in so doing, and agree that your decision to forego further action on this bill will not prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I would support your request for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction should this bill be the subject of a House-Senate conference.

I will include a copy of this letter and your response in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD when this bill is considered by the House. Thank you again for your assistance.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2006.

Hon. MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OXLEY: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," which is scheduled for Floor action on Tuesday, February 28, 2006.

As you noted, the Committee on Ways and Means maintains jurisdiction over matters that concern raising revenue. H.R. 2872 contains a provision that establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill, and thus falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. However, in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation.

I appreciate and agree to your offer to include this exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Best regards,

BILL THOMAS,
Chairman.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from

Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2872, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO AWARD A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1259) to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1259

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt overruled his top generals and ordered the creation of an all Black flight training program. President Roosevelt took this action one day after the NAACP filed suit on behalf of Howard University student Yancy Williams and others in Federal court to force the Department of War to accept Black pilot trainees. Yancy Williams had a civilian pilot's license and had earned an engineering degree. Years later, Major Yancy Williams participated in an air surveillance project created by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

(2) Due to the rigid system of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, Black military pilots were trained at a separate airfield built near Tuskegee, Alabama. They became known as the "Tuskegee Airmen".

(3) The Tuskegee Airmen inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, paving the way for full racial integration in the Armed Forces. They overcame the enormous challenges of prejudice and discrimination, succeeding, despite obstacles that threatened failure.

(4) From all accounts, the training of the Tuskegee Airmen was an experiment established to prove that so-called "coloreds" were incapable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft. Studies commissioned by the Army War College between 1924 and 1939 concluded that Blacks were unfit for leadership roles and incapable of aviation. Instead, the Tuskegee Airmen excelled.

(5) Overall, some 992 Black pilots graduated from the pilot training program of the Tuskegee Army Air Field, with the last class finishing in June 1946, 450 of whom served in combat. The first class of cadets began in July 1941 with 13 airmen, all of whom had college degrees, some with Ph.D. degrees, and all of whom had pilot's licenses. One of the graduates was Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a United States Military Academy graduate. Four aviation cadets were commissioned as second lieutenants, and 5 received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

(6) That the experiment achieved success rather than the expected failure is further evidenced by the eventual promotion of 3 of these pioneers through the commissioned officer ranks to flag rank, including the late

General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., United States Air Force, the late General Daniel "Chappie" James, United States Air Force, our Nation's first Black 4-star general, and Major General Lucius Theus, United States Air Force (retired).

(7) 450 Black fighter pilots under the command of then Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., fought in World War II aerial battles over North Africa, Sicily, and Europe, flying, in succession, P-40, P-39, P-47, and P-51 aircraft. These gallant men flew 15,553 sorties and 1,578 missions with the 12th Tactical Air Force and the 15th Strategic Air Force.

(8) Colonel Davis later became the first Black flag officer of the United States Air Force, retired as a 3-star general, and was honored with a 4th star in retirement by President William J. Clinton.

(9) German pilots, who both feared and respected the Tuskegee Airmen, called them the "Schwartzes Vogelmenschen" (or "Black Birdmen"). White American bomber crews reverently referred to them as the "Black Redtail Angels", because of the bright red painted on the tail assemblies of their fighter aircraft and because of their reputation for not losing bombers to enemy fighters as they provided close escort for bombing missions over strategic targets in Europe.

(10) The 99th Fighter Squadron, after having distinguished itself over North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, joined 3 other Black squadrons, the 100th, the 301st, and the 302nd, designated as the 332nd Fighter Group. They then comprised the largest fighter unit in the 15th Air Force. From Italian bases, they destroyed many enemy targets on the ground and at sea, including a German destroyer in strafing attacks, and they destroyed numerous enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground.

(11) 66 of these pilots were killed in combat, while another 32 were either forced down or shot down and captured to become prisoners of war. These Black airmen came home with 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, and Legions of Merit, one Presidential Unit Citation, and the Red Star of Yugoslavia.

(12) Other Black pilots, navigators, bombardiers and crewman who were trained for medium bombardment duty as the 477th Bomber Group (Medium) were joined by veterans of the 332nd Fighter Group to form the 477th Composite Group, flying the B-25 and P-47 aircraft. The demands of the members of the 477th Composite Group for parity in treatment and for recognition as competent military professionals, combined with the magnificent wartime records of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group, led to a review of the racial policies of the Department of War.

(13) In September 1947, the United States Air Force, as a separate service, reactivated the 332d Fighter Group under the Tactical Air command. Members of the 332d Fighter Group were "Top Guns" in the 1st annual Air Force Gunnery Meet in 1949.

(14) For every Black pilot, there were 12 other civilian or military Black men and women performing ground support duties. Many of these men and women remained in the military service during the post-World War II era and spearheaded the integration of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(15) Major achievements are attributed to many of those who returned to civilian life and earned leadership positions and respect as businessmen, corporate executives, religious leaders, lawyers, doctors, educators, bankers, and political leaders.

(16) A period of nearly 30 years of anonymity for the Tuskegee Airmen was ended in 1972 with the founding of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., in Detroit, Michigan. Organized as a non-military and nonprofit entity, Tuskegee

Airmen, Inc., exists primarily to motivate and inspire young Americans to become participants in our Nation's society and its democratic process, and to preserve the history of their legacy.

(17) The Tuskegee Airmen have several memorials in place to perpetuate the memory of who they were and what they accomplished, including—

(A) the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., National Scholarship Fund for high school seniors who excel in mathematics, but need financial assistance to begin a college program;

(B) a museum in historic Fort Wayne in Detroit, Michigan;

(C) Memorial Park at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio;

(D) a statue of a Tuskegee Airman in the Honor Park at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and

(E) a National Historic Site at Moton Field, where primary flight training was performed under contract with the Tuskegee Institute.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen, collectively, in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Tuskegee Airmen.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

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

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

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

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medals authorized under section 2.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) each will control 20 minutes.