

PUBLIC LAW 118–88—SEPT. 26, 2024

**BILLIE JEAN KING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD
MEDAL ACT**

Public Law 118–88
118th Congress

An Act

Sept. 26, 2024
[S. 2861]

Billie Jean King
Congressional
Gold Medal Act.
31 USC 5111
note.

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

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 “Billie Jean King Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Billie Jean King, born Billie Jean Moffitt on November 22, 1943, in Long Beach, California, demonstrated athletic prowess from a young age. She was introduced to tennis at the age of 11, and soon after, Billie Jean purchased her first tennis racket using money she earned working various jobs in her neighborhood.

(2) Billie Jean broke numerous barriers to become a number one professional tennis player. She dominated women’s tennis with 39 Grand Slam singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles, including a record 20 championships at Wimbledon. She also was a member of 3 World TeamTennis championship teams.

(3) After growing in prominence, Billie Jean used her platform as a celebrity to fight for equal rights and opportunities for equality for all in sports, and society, in the United States.

(4) Billie Jean played an instrumental role in the passage of title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), a law that mandates equal funding for women’s and men’s sports programs in schools and colleges. This legislation has unlocked a world of opportunities for girls and women in education and sports.

(5) During Billie Jean’s career, the pay difference between prize money for men and women in tennis continued to expand. By the early 1970s, the pay gap in prize money reached ratios of as much as 12 to 1. Fewer and fewer tournaments were hosting women’s events. Billie Jean harnessed the energy of the women’s rights movement to create a women’s tennis tour that would elevate women’s tennis and establish pay equity within the sport. Along with 8 other women tennis players, she formed an independent women’s professional tennis circuit, the Virginia Slims Series.

(6) In 1973, Billie Jean founded the Women’s Tennis Association, today’s principal governing body for women’s professional tennis.

(7) Billie Jean helped found womenSports magazine and founded the Women’s Sports Foundation. Both have been at the forefront of advancing women’s voice in sports.

(8) Billie Jean successfully lobbied for equal prize money for men and women at the 1973 US Open Tennis Championships. It would take another 34 years for the other 3 major tournaments to all offer equal prize money.

(9) In 1973, Billie Jean played a tennis match against Bobby Riggs, a former World Number 1 player who sought to undermine the credibility and prominence of women in sports. Billie Jean defeated Riggs in what became a firm declaration of women’s role in sports and society.

(10) Billie Jean King was the first tennis player and woman to be named Sports Illustrated’s Sportsperson of the Year, one of the “100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century” by LIFE magazine, was the recipient of the 1999 Arthur Ashe Award for Courage, and has been admitted to the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame, the International Tennis Hall of Fame, and the National Women’s Hall of Fame.

(11) In 2006, the United States Tennis Association recognized Billie Jean’s immeasurable impact on the sport of tennis by renaming the site of the US Open in her honor as the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, which is located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens, New York. This was the first time a major sporting complex was named after a woman.

(12) In 2009, Billie Jean was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, by President Barack Obama for her impactful work advocating for the rights of women. She was the first female athlete to receive this honor.

(13) In 2014, Billie Jean King founded the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative to empower companies and individuals to create inclusive work environments that celebrate and promote diversity and equality in the workplace.

(14) In 2020, Fed Cup, the world cup of women’s tennis, was renamed the Billie Jean King Cup, making it the first global team competition to be named after a woman.

(15) Billie Jean King’s extraordinary courage, leadership, and activism helped propel the women’s movement forward, and open doors for countless people in the United States. On and off the court, Billie Jean has served as an inspiration to millions of people the world over. Few women and men have had a greater impact on their sport and on our society than Billie Jean King.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to Billie Jean King, in recognition of her contribution to the United States and her courageous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal rights for women in athletics, education, and our society.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the presentation described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary. The design shall bear an image of, and inscription of the name of, Billie Jean King.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

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

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

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

(a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

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

Approved September 26, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2861:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 170 (2024):

May 8, considered and passed Senate.

Sept. 17, considered and passed Senate.

