

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1388

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins to honor and memorialize the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion of 1865.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2023

Mr. CRAWFORD (for himself, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. CLOUD, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. LESKO, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. HERN, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. BALDERSON, Ms. DE LA CRUZ, Mr. BOST, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. BABIN, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MANN, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. EMMER, Mr. HILL, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BURCHETT, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. COHEN) 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 to honor and memorialize the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion of 1865.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Sultana Steamboat
3 Disaster Commemorative Coin Act of 2023”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) On April 27, 1865, the Sultana, a Mis-
7 sissippi River paddlewheel steamboat, exploded kill-
8 ing nearly 1,200 of the 2,137 passengers and crew
9 on board. Based on the number of recorded casual-
10 ties, this event is the worst maritime disaster in
11 United States history.

12 (2) Those aboard the boat were mostly paroled
13 Union soldiers recently released from the Confed-
14 erate prisoner-of-war camps in Cahaba, Alabama,
15 and Andersonville, Georgia. These men largely
16 hailed from Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, Michigan,
17 Kentucky, and West Virginia.

18 (3) The Sultana disaster was overshadowed by
19 other major events surrounding the end of the
20 American Civil War, including the assassination of
21 President Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865, and
22 subsequently, the killing of President Lincoln’s as-
23 sassin, John Wilkes Booth, on April 26, 1865, just
24 1 day before the Sultana disaster.

25 (4) The Sultana Historical Preservation Society
26 now operates the Sultana Disaster Museum in Mar-

1 ion, Arkansas, with artifacts, stories, and exhibits
2 that tell this story. Plans and fundraising are pro-
3 gressing for a much larger facility that can better
4 acquire and preserve the Sultana history.

5 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

6 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In recognition and remem-
7 brance of the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion
8 of 1865, which is the greatest maritime disaster in United
9 States history, the Secretary of the Treasury (hereinafter
10 in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall mint and
11 issue the following coins:

12 (1) \$5 GOLD COINS.—Not more than 100,000
13 \$5 coins, which shall—

14 (A) weigh 8.359 grams;

15 (B) have a diameter of 0.850 inches; and

16 (C) contain not less than 90 percent gold.

17 (2) \$1 SILVER COINS.—Not more than 500,000
18 \$1 coins, which shall—

19 (A) weigh 26.73 grams;

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

21 (C) contain not less than 90 percent silver.

22 (3) HALF-DOLLAR CLAD COINS.—Not more
23 than 750,000 half-dollar coins which shall—

24 (A) weigh 11.34 grams;

25 (B) have a diameter of 1.205 inches; and

1 (C) be minted to the specifications for half-
2 dollar coins contained in section 5112(b) of title
3 31, United States Code.

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

7 (c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
8 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins
9 minted under this Act shall be considered to be numis-
10 matic items.

11 **SEC. 4. DESIGNS OF COIN.**

12 (a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—The designs of the
13 coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the
14 historical significance of the Sultana disaster and the sac-
15 rifice of the many people of the United States who died
16 and survived on April 27, 1865.

17 (b) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin
18 minted under this Act, there shall be—

19 (1) a designation of the value of the coin;

20 (2) an inscription of the year “2023”; and

21 (3) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”, “In
22 God We Trust”, “United States of America”, and
23 “E Pluribus Unum”.

24 (c) SELECTION.—The designs for the coins minted
25 under this Act shall be—

1 (1) selected by the Secretary after consultation
2 with the Commission of Fine Arts; and

3 (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory
4 Committee.

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

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

8 (b) **PERIOD OF ISSUANCE.**—The Secretary may issue
9 coins minted under this Act only during the 1-year period
10 beginning on January 1, 2023.

11 **SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.**

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

15 (1) the face value of the coins;

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

18 (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins
19 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,
20 overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

21 (b) **PREPAID ORDERS.**—

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

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

4 (c) MARKETING AND EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN.—
5 The Secretary shall develop and execute a marketing, pro-
6 motion, and educational program to promote the collecting
7 of the coins authorized under this Act.

8 **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—All sales of coins issued under this
10 Act shall include a surcharge of—

- 11 (1) \$35 per coin for the \$5 coin;
12 (2) \$10 per coin for the \$1 coin; and
13 (3) \$5 per coin for the half-dollar coin.

14 (b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of
15 title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by
16 the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act
17 shall be promptly paid by the Secretary to the Sultana
18 Historical Preservation Society for the purpose of estab-
19 lishing, operating, and maintaining a museum to tell the
20 story of the Sultana, including—

- 21 (1) constructing the museum facility;
22 (2) creating, maintaining, and updating as nec-
23 essary museum exhibits;

1 (3) acquiring and preserving artifacts, memora-
2 bilia, and historic sites related to the Sultana dis-
3 aster; and

4 (4) maintaining an operational reserve fund for
5 the purposes described in this subsection.

6 (c) AUDITS.—The Sultana Historical Preservation
7 Society shall be subject to the audit requirements of sec-
8 tion 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, with regard
9 to the amounts received under subsection (b).

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

20 **SEC. 8. FINANCIAL ASSURANCES.**

21 The Secretary shall take such actions as may be nec-
22 essary to ensure that—

23 (1) minting and issuing coins under this Act
24 will not result in any net cost to the United States
25 Government; and

1 (2) no funds, including applicable surcharges,
2 are disbursed to the recipient designated in section
3 7 until the total cost of designing and issuing all of
4 the coins authorized by this Act (including labor,
5 materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses,
6 marketing, and shipping) is recovered by the United
7 States Treasury, consistent with sections 5112(m)
8 and 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code.

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