

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1179

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal which they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking four decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to our country.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

Mr. SUOZZI (for himself, Mr. BACON, Mr. MOONEY, Mr. KILMER, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. TRONE, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. HUFFMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal which they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking four decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to our country.

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 “Iran Hostages Con-
3 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) On January 20, 1981, United States dip-
7 lomats, military personnel, and civilians were re-
8 leased after being held hostage for 444 days by mili-
9 tant student supporters of Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah
10 Khomeini in a violation of international law. They
11 were taken from the United States Embassy in
12 Tehran, Iran, this came to be known as the Iran
13 Hostage Crisis.

14 (2) The hostages were subjected to intense
15 physical and psychological torture throughout their
16 captivity, such as mock execution, beatings, solitary
17 confinement, and inhospitable living conditions.

18 (3) Throughout their time held, they were rou-
19 tinely told to denounce the United States, when they
20 refused, they were tortured, yet they remained
21 strong in their spirit.

22 (4) One hostage wrote “Viva la roja, blanco, y
23 azul” which translates to “Long live the red, white,
24 and blue” on the wall of his cell as a reminder of
25 the values he swore to protect.

1 (5) The hostages showed extraordinary courage
2 by continually engaging in acts of resistance against
3 their captors in the face of gross violations of their
4 human rights, such as refusing to sign condemna-
5 tions of the United States.

6 (6) Many of the hostages still experience trau-
7 ma as a result of the events of the crisis and deserve
8 to have their suffering recognized.

9 (7) While 35 of the hostages are still living, it
10 is important that we reflect on their resilience and
11 strength which serve as an example to current gen-
12 erations. Let us acknowledge them as heroes, who
13 stood in positions of great tribulation but who, for
14 us, endured so that we may know the blessing of
15 being an American. Let us be more like them.

16 (8) On January 22, 1981, President Jimmy
17 Carter met with the hostages in West Germany and
18 stated, “One of the acts in my life which has been
19 the most moving and gratifying in meeting with and
20 discussing the future and the past with the now lib-
21 erated Americans who were held hostage in Iran for
22 so long. I pointed out to them that, since their cap-
23 ture by the Iranian terrorists and their being held
24 in this despicable act of savagery, that the American
25 people’s hearts have gone out to them and the na-

1 tion has been united as perhaps never before in his-
2 tory and that the prayers that have gone up from
3 the people throughout the world to God for their
4 safety have finally been answered.”.

5 (9) On January 28, 1981, when welcoming the
6 hostages home, President Ronald Reagan stated,
7 “You’ve come home to a people who for 444 days
8 suffered the pain of your imprisonment, prayed for
9 your safety, and most importantly, shared your de-
10 termination that the spirit of free men and women
11 is not a fit subject for barter. You’ve represented
12 under great stress the highest traditions of public
13 service. Your conduct is symbolic of the millions of
14 professional diplomats, military personnel, and oth-
15 ers who have rendered service to their country.”.

16 (10) During the 444 days the brave Americans
17 were held, the rest of the country held its breath,
18 waiting for news of the hostages. The country hoped
19 and prayed together, as one, for the hostages’ safe
20 return.

21 (11) United States Ambassador to Iran from
22 1979 to 1980 Bruce Laingen, the highest ranking
23 diplomat held hostage, summed up the experience by
24 saying “Fifty-three Americans who will always have
25 a love affair with this country and who join with you

1 in a prayer of thanksgiving for the way in which this
2 crisis has strengthened the spirit and resilience and
3 strength that is the mark of a truly free society.”.
4 It is now our responsibility to honor the spirit, resil-
5 ience, and strength that the hostages displayed dur-
6 ing their 444 days of imprisonment.

7 (12) Now, more than four decades later, we
8 continue to honor the hostages. The recipients of
9 this award are heroes in every sense of the word.
10 They are role models that wore their American pride
11 with esteem and have allowed for subsequent genera-
12 tions to appreciate the blessing of being an Amer-
13 ican. Today, as we prepare to mark 40 years after
14 their release, we acknowledge their endurance,
15 strength, and contributions to seeing a more peace-
16 ful world. They suffered for America and now it is
17 our duty to recognize them for it.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

19 In this Act, the term “hostage” means an American
20 that was taken captive on November 4, 1979, in Tehran,
21 Iran, at the United States embassy and released on—

- 22 (1) July 11, 1980; or
23 (2) January 20, 1981.

1 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
4 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
5 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
6 appropriate design to the 53 hostages of the Iran Hostage
7 Crisis, in recognition of their bravery and endurance
8 throughout their captivity which started on November 4,
9 1979, and lasted until January 21, 1981.

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

15 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
17 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
18 shall be given to the National Museum of American
19 History of the Smithsonian Institution, where it
20 shall be available for display as appropriate and
21 made available for research.

22 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
23 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
24 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
25 available for loan, as appropriate, so that the medal
26 may be displayed elsewhere.

1 **SEC. 5. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 (a) SILVER DUPLICATE MEDALS.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall strike
4 duplicates in silver of the gold medal struck pursu-
5 ant to section 4 to be awarded in accordance with
6 paragraph.

7 (2) ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARD.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—A hostage shall be eli-
9 gible to be awarded a silver duplicate medal
10 struck under paragraph (1) in recognition of
11 the endurance of the Iran Hostages.

12 (B) DEATH OF A HOSTAGE.—In the event
13 of the death of a hostage who has not been
14 awarded a silver duplicate medal under this
15 subsection, the Secretary may award a silver
16 duplicate medal to the next of kin or other per-
17 sonal representative of the hostage.

18 (b) BRONZE DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The Secretary
19 may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal
20 struck pursuant to section 4 under such regulations as the
21 Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the
22 cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of ma-
23 chinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold
24 and silver medals.

1 **SEC. 6. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
3 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
4 51 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

8 **SEC. 7. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.**

9 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of
10 complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,
11 shall be determined by reference to the latest statement
12 titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this
13 Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record
14 by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-
15 vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the
16 vote on passage.

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