

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2233

To posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Aretha Franklin in recognition of her contributions of outstanding artistic and historical significance to culture in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 26, 2021

Mrs. LAWRENCE (for herself and Mr. COHEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, 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 posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Aretha Franklin in recognition of her contributions of outstanding artistic and historical significance to culture in 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 “Aretha Franklin Con-
5 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Aretha Franklin was born on March 25,
2 1942, in Memphis, Tennessee, and died peacefully at
3 her home in Detroit, Michigan, surrounded by family
4 and loved ones on August 16, 2018.

5 (2) Aretha Franklin’s musical talents have in-
6 fluenced generations of musicians and political lead-
7 ers, creating a legacy that spans an incredible 6 dec-
8 ades.

9 (3) Aretha Franklin, dubbed the “Queen of
10 Soul”, was the first woman ever inducted into the
11 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, was a 2005 recipient
12 of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and was a
13 1999 recipient of the National Medal of Arts and
14 Humanities Award, among other accolades.

15 (4) Aretha Franklin’s music served as a 1960s
16 call to action that inspired thousands to join civil
17 rights movements and still resonates across these
18 movements today.

19 (5) Aretha Franklin’s contributions go beyond
20 music and arts.

21 (6) Aretha Franklin was also a philanthropist
22 who supported causes that advanced civil rights,
23 human health, and gender equality.

1 (7) Aretha Franklin’s talents instilled hope, up-
2 lifted generations, and changed the lives of millions
3 of people across the globe.

4 (8) The City of Detroit shaped Aretha’s life and
5 music, as her father and church introduced her to
6 local Motown artists.

7 (9) In return, Aretha made countless contribu-
8 tions to the City of Detroit, and few people have
9 played a greater role in shaping the Nation’s cul-
10 turally and socially relevant discography than Aretha
11 Franklin.

12 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

13 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
14 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
15 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
16 for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of Congress,
17 of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration
18 of Aretha Franklin, in recognition of her outstanding ar-
19 tistic and historical significance to the culture of the
20 United States.

21 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
22 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
23 of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
24 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-

1 blem, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the
2 Secretary.

3 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
5 gold medal referred to in subsection (a), the gold
6 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,
7 where it will be displayed as appropriate and made
8 available for research.

9 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
10 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
11 make the gold medal received under this Act avail-
12 able for display elsewhere, particularly at other loca-
13 tions and events associated with Aretha Franklin.

14 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

15 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
16 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
17 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
18 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
19 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

20 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

21 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
22 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
23 51 of title 31, United States Code.

1 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
2 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
3 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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