

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8182

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a commemorative coin  
in recognition of James Weldon Johnson.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 22, 2022

Mr. LAWSON of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to  
the Committee on Financial Services

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a commemorative coin in recognition of James Weldon Johnson.

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 “James Weldon John-  
5       son Commemorative Coin Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds the following:

8               (1) James Weldon Johnson was born on June  
9       17, 1871, in Jacksonville, Florida, to a Bahamian  
10       mother, Helen Louise Dillet, and African-American

1 father, James Johnson. He had a younger brother,  
2 John Rosamund Johnson. His mother had a large  
3 influence on his interest in literature and music.

4 (2) At the age of 16, James Weldon Johnson  
5 enrolled at Atlanta University, now Clark Atlanta  
6 University, a historically Black college, and grad-  
7 uated in 1894.

8 (3) James Weldon Johnson returned to Jack-  
9 sonville following his graduation, where he served as  
10 principal of the Stanton School. He expanded the  
11 school to include Florida's first high school for Afri-  
12 can Americans, which opened in 1898.

13 (4) In 1895, James Weldon Johnson started  
14 the Daily American, Florida's first African-American  
15 newspaper.

16 (5) During this period, James Weldon Johnson  
17 was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1897. He be-  
18 came the first African American to pass the Florida  
19 Bar since the Reconstruction Era ended.

20 (6) In 1899, James Weldon Johnson wrote the  
21 poem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" to honor Abra-  
22 ham Lincoln's birthday. His brother, John  
23 Rosamund Johnson, composed the music to turn it  
24 into a song. In 1919, the National Advancement of

1 Colored People (NAACP) designated the song as the  
2 “Negro National Anthem”.

3 (7) As part of the Great Migration, James  
4 Weldon Johnson and John Rosamund Johnson  
5 moved to Harlem, New York. They became com-  
6 posers for Broadway shows and later became inte-  
7 gral figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

8 (8) After winning the election, in 1906, Presi-  
9 dent Theodore Roosevelt appointed James Weldon  
10 Johnson as U.S. Consul in Venezuela. In 1909, he  
11 was appointed as U.S. Consul in Nicaragua by  
12 President William Taft.

13 (9) Following his diplomatic service, James  
14 Weldon Johnson became a field secretary for the  
15 NAACP in 1916. In 1920, he became the first Afri-  
16 can-American Executive Secretary for the NAACP,  
17 where he helped increase membership, create new  
18 chapters, and organize Civil Rights movements  
19 across the country.

20 (10) James Weldon Johnson represented the  
21 NAACP as the chief Congressional lobbyist to en-  
22 courage passage of the Representative Leonidas  
23 Dyer anti-lynching bill. This bill went on to pass the  
24 U.S. House of Representatives in 1922 but failed in  
25 the U.S. Senate due to the filibuster.

1           (11) In 1930, after serving 10 years in the  
2           NAACP, James Weldon Johnson accepted an offer  
3           to become the Spence Chair of Creative Literature  
4           and Writing at Fisk University, a historically black  
5           college in Nashville, Tennessee.

6           (12) In 1934, James Weldon Johnson was  
7           hired as the first Black professor at New York Uni-  
8           versity, where he taught Creative Literature and  
9           Education.

10          (13) James Weldon Johnson was an accom-  
11          plished novelist and poet. He released several poetry  
12          collections and novels, among his most popular  
13          pieces of literature were God's Trombones: Seven  
14          Negro Sermons in Verse and The Autobiography of  
15          an Ex-Colored Man.

16          (14) James Weldon Johnson passed away sud-  
17          denly in 1938. His funeral was held in Harlem, New  
18          York, where over 2,000 people attended.

19          (15) James Weldon Johnson's excellence revolu-  
20          tionized literature, music, education, politics, and  
21          law. His fearlessness to fight for equality created  
22          pathways for African Americans to proudly pursue  
23          their aspirations.

1 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

2 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In recognition and celebration  
3 of James Weldon Johnson, the Secretary of the Treasury  
4 (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall  
5 mint and issue not more than 400,000 \$1 coins, which  
6 shall—

7 (1) weigh 26.73 grams;

8 (2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

9 (3) contain not less than 90-percent silver.

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

13 (c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
14 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins  
15 minted under this Act shall be considered to be numis-  
16 matic items.

17 **SEC. 4. DESIGN OF THE COIN.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The designs for the coin minted  
19 under this Act shall be emblematic of James Weldon  
20 Johnson and shall bear the name and image of James  
21 Weldon Johnson.

22 (b) DESIGNATIONS AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On the coin  
23 minted under this Act there shall be—

24 (1) a designation of the denomination of the  
25 coin;

26 (2) an inscription of the year “2025”;

1           (3) the name and likeness of James Weldon  
2     Johnson; and

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

6     (c) SELECTION.—The designs for the coin minted  
7     under this Act shall be—

8           (1) selected by the Secretary, after consultation  
9     with the James Weldon Johnson Foundation, His-  
10    toric Stanton, Inc., the family of James Weldon  
11    Johnson, and Commission of the Fine Arts; and

12          (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory  
13    Committee.

14   **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF THE COIN.**

15    (a) QUALITY OF THE COIN.—The coin minted under  
16    this Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

17    (b) PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.—The Secretary may  
18    issue the coin minted under this Act only during the 1-  
19    year period beginning on January 1, 2025.

20   **SEC. 6. SALE OF THE COIN.**

21    (a) SALE PRICE.—The coin issued under this Act  
22    shall be sold by the Secretary at a price based upon the  
23    sum of—

24          (1) the face value of the coin;

1           (2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with  
2       respect to such coin; and

3           (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coin  
4       (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,  
5       overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

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

9       (c) PREPAID ORDERS.—

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

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

16   **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

17       (a) IN GENERAL.—All sales of the coin minted under  
18       this Act shall include a surcharge of \$10 per coin for the  
19       \$1 coin.

20       (b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of  
21       title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by  
22       the Secretary from the sale of coin issued under this Act  
23       shall be promptly paid equally by the Secretary to the His-  
24       toric Stanton, Inc., and the James Weldon Johnson Foun-

1 dation, for the purpose of strengthening educational out-  
2 comes for students, with a focus on students of color.

3 (c) AUDITS.—The Historic Stanton, Inc., and James  
4 Weldon Johnson Foundation shall be subject to the audit  
5 requirements of section 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United  
6 States Code, with respect to amounts received under sub-  
7 section (b).

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

17 **SEC. 8. FINANCIAL ASSURANCES.**

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

20 (1) minting and issuing the coin under this Act  
21 will not result in any net cost to the United States  
22 Government; and

23 (2) no funds, including applicable surcharges,  
24 are disbursed to the recipient designated in section  
25 7 until the total cost of designing and issuing all of



1       the coins authorized by this Act (including labor,  
2       materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses,  
3       marketing, and shipping) is recovered by the United  
4       States Treasury, consistent with sections 5112(m)  
5       and 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code.

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