

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2130

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Myrlie Evers-Williams, in recognition of the great contributions and ultimate sacrifice she and her husband, the assassinated civil rights leader Medgar Wiley Evers, made in the fight for racial equality in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 2017

Mr. HARPER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Myrlie Evers-Williams, in recognition of the great contributions and ultimate sacrifice she and her husband, the assassinated civil rights leader Medgar Wiley Evers, made in the fight for racial equality 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 “Civil Rights Legacy
5 of Medgar Wiley Evers Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) An integral part of the fight for racial
2 equality, Medgar Wiley Evers, was born July 2,
3 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi, to James and Jessie
4 Evers.

5 (2) Faithfully serving his country, Medgar
6 Evers willingly left high school to join the Army at
7 the start of World War II.

8 (3) After the conclusion of the war, Mr. Evers
9 returned home to Mississippi, completed high school,
10 enrolled in Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical Col-
11 lege (presently known as Alcorn State University)
12 and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business
13 Administration.

14 (4) While at Alcorn State University, Medgar
15 Evers met and married fellow Alcorn student, Myrlie
16 Beasley, of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

17 (5) Upon graduation, Myrlie and Medgar Evers
18 moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where Medgar
19 held a job with Magnolia Mutual Life Insurance
20 Company, and began establishing local chapters of
21 the National Association for the Advancement of
22 Colored People (“NAACP”) throughout the Mis-
23 sissippi Delta.

24 (6) Having been so moved by the immense suf-
25 fering of African-Americans in Mississippi, Medgar

1 Evers felt compelled to fight to change the cir-
2 cumstances and challenges facing them and, in
3 1954, Medgar Evers became the first known Afri-
4 can-American to apply to the University of Mis-
5 sissippi School of Law. Mr. Evers was denied enroll-
6 ment.

7 (7) In 1954, Medgar Evers became the first
8 Field Secretary for the Mississippi chapter of the
9 NAACP.

10 (8) In the capacities of his new position,
11 Medgar Evers hosted numerous voter registration ef-
12 forts in Mississippi and, as a result of these activi-
13 ties, received numerous threats against his life.

14 (9) Despite these threats, Mr. Evers carried on
15 his work with dedication and courage, organizing
16 rallies, building membership within the NAACP, and
17 traveling around the country educating the public on
18 the fight for Civil Rights.

19 (10) Medgar and Myrlie Evers' passion for
20 quality education for all children led them to file suit
21 against the Jackson, Mississippi, public school sys-
22 tem gaining him attention with the national media
23 as a leader of the Civil Rights Movement in Mis-
24 sissippi.

1 (11) As a result of his continued and ongoing
2 efforts—rallies, sit-ins, and protests—to stand up
3 for the rights of African-Americans in Mississippi,
4 Mr. Evers was arrested, beaten, and jailed with his
5 due process rights denied.

6 (12) The senseless and abhorrent violence
7 against Mr. Evers reached its pinnacle on June 12,
8 1963, when he was violently shot in front of his
9 home and died shortly afterwards in a local hospital,
10 mere hours after President John F. Kennedy had
11 made a national televised speech from the Oval Of-
12 fice calling for full racial integration in America.
13 The Civil Rights Act was enacted the following year.

14 (13) As a veteran, Evers was buried with full
15 military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

16 (14) On June 23, 1963, Byron De La Beck-
17 with, a member of the White Citizens' Council, was
18 arrested for Evers' murder, but juries in 1964, com-
19 posed solely of White men, twice deadlocked on De
20 La Beckwith's guilt, resulting in mistrials.

21 (15) Following two trials resulting in acquittal,
22 in 1990, Mrs. Evers convinced Mississippi prosecu-
23 tors to reopen Medgar Evers' murder case, and a
24 new trial led to the conviction and life imprisonment
25 of Medgar Evers' killer in 1994.

1 (16) It is befitting that Congress bestow the
2 highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold
3 Medal, to Myrlie in recognition of the great con-
4 tributions and ultimate sacrifice she and her hus-
5 band, the assassinated civil rights leader Medgar
6 Wiley Evers, made in the fight for racial equality,
7 which tragically led to his assassination, but also
8 was a major catalyst in passage and enactment of
9 the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

10 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

11 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
12 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
13 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
14 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
15 medal of appropriate design to Myrlie Evers-Williams, in
16 recognition of the great contributions and ultimate sac-
17 rifice she and her husband, the assassinated civil rights
18 leader Medgar Wiley Evers, made in the fight for racial
19 equality in the United States.

20 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
21 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
22 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
23 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
24 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
25 retary.

1 (c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the
2 gold medal under subsection (a), the medal shall be given
3 to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, where it shall be
4 available for display or temporary loan to be displayed
5 elsewhere, as appropriate.

6 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

7 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
8 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
9 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
10 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
11 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
12 and the cost of the gold medal.

13 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDAL.**

14 (a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The gold medal struck pur-
15 suant to this Act is a national medal for purposes of chap-
16 ter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

17 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEM.—For purposes of section
18 5134 of title 31, United States Code, the gold medal
19 struck under this Act shall be considered to be a numis-
20 matic item.

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