

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4714

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships, in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as the leaders of a humanitarian relief organization that exemplifies the compassionate character of America.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 21, 2017

Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BARTON, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HURD, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. CULBERSON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

---

## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships, in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as the leaders of a humanitarian relief organization that exemplifies the compassionate character of America.

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. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Mercy Ships was founded in 1978 and has  
2 worked in more than 70 countries, providing services  
3 valued at more than \$1.3 billion, treating more than  
4 2.56 million direct beneficiaries.

5           (2) Mercy Ships owns and operates the world's  
6 largest private hospital ship, the Africa Mercy that  
7 has five state-of-the-art operating rooms and ward  
8 bed space for 82 patients.

9           (3) Mercy Ships vessels are staffed by profes-  
10 sional volunteer crew including surgeons, nurses,  
11 doctors, dentists, cooks, engineers, agriculturalists,  
12 teachers, and others.

13           (4) Mercy Ships has performed more than  
14 82,000 life-changing or life-saving operations such  
15 as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, or-  
16 thopedic procedures, facial reconstruction, obstetric  
17 fistula repair, and tumor removal.

18           (5) Mercy Ships has treated over 147,000 den-  
19 tal patients including over 390,000 dental proce-  
20 dures.

21           (6) Mercy Ships has trained more than 5,900  
22 local professionals (including surgeons) who have in  
23 turn trained many others.

24           (7) Mercy Ships has trained over 38,100 local  
25 professionals in their area of expertise including an-

1 esthesiology, midwifery, sterilization, orthopedic and  
2 reconstructive surgery, and leadership, thereby in-  
3 creasing medical capacity in the host nation.

4 (8) Mercy Ships has taught over 198,000 local  
5 people in basic health care.

6 (9) Mercy Ships has completed over 1,100 in-  
7 frastructure development projects focusing on water  
8 and sanitation education, agriculture and construc-  
9 tion projects which improve local health care delivery  
10 systems.

11 (10) Annually, Mercy Ships has over 1,600 vol-  
12 unteers who help in locations around the world, 900  
13 of which serve in Africa. At any given time, there  
14 are more than 400 crew from 40 nations onboard  
15 the Africa Mercy.

16 (11) The Africa Mercy alone has had over  
17 4,900 crew from 74 countries serve onboard since its  
18 inception in 2007. In addition, more than 950 local  
19 Day Workers from 12 different countries have  
20 served alongside since it first docked in Africa.

21 (12) Mercy Ships has served some of the  
22 world's poorest populations and completed over 589  
23 port visits in 55 developing nations and 18 developed  
24 nations for a total of 73 nations including: Aus-  
25 tralia, Bahamas, Benin, Belgium, Belize, Brazil,

1 Canada, China, Congo Brazzaville, Columbia, Cuba,  
2 Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Esto-  
3 nia, Faroe Islands, Fiji, France, Gabon, The Gam-  
4 bia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala,  
5 Guinea (West Africa), Guinea-Bissau, Guyana,  
6 Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica,  
7 Korea, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar,  
8 Malta, Mexico, Montserrat, The Netherlands, New  
9 Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pan-  
10 ama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Rus-  
11 sia, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands,  
12 South Africa, Spain, St. Eustatius (NL), St. Kitts,  
13 St. Thomas, St. Vincent, Sweden, Tahiti, Togo,  
14 Tonga, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, the United  
15 States, and Vanuatu.

16 (13) Through the years, Mercy Ships has had  
17 four hospital ships that have served in some of the  
18 poorest ports in the world. Those include:

19 (A) The 16,500-ton Africa Mercy is the  
20 world's largest nongovernmental hospital ship  
21 and is dedicated to the continent of Africa.

22 (B) The 522-foot Anastasis was the flag  
23 ship, and completed her first relief mission in  
24 1982 to Guatemala. Her crew of 400 worked in  
25 Africa until she was decommissioned in 2007.

1 (C) Acquired in 1994, the 265-foot Carib-  
2 bean Mercy with her crew of 150 focused on the  
3 Caribbean basin and Central America with its  
4 Eye Surgery Unit. The ship was sold in 2006.

5 (D) Donated in 1983, the 172-foot Good  
6 Samaritan served the Caribbean, Central and  
7 South America for 11 years with a crew of 60.  
8 Renamed the Island Mercy, she was redeployed  
9 to the South Pacific in 1994 and served there  
10 until sold in 2001.

11 (E) Mercy Ships is currently building a  
12 new hospital ship to serve Africa's most needy  
13 for the next 50 years with delivery expected in  
14 2018. The new vessel, larger than the Africa  
15 Mercy, will assume the title of world's largest  
16 private hospital ship with increased capacity  
17 building and a focus on healthcare training. It  
18 will also further the commitment of Mercy  
19 Ships to provide and promote through teaching,  
20 safe surgery globally as demonstrated by their  
21 membership in the G4 Alliance.

22 (14) Mercy Ships has hosted Presidents and  
23 other heads of state from many nations around the  
24 world onboard their hospital ships who commended  
25 the free health care provided to their people.

1           (15) Mercy Ships has been endorsed by Presi-  
2           dent Nelson Mandela, President George Bush,  
3           Desmund Tutu, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Sir  
4           John Major, President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma,  
5           Tony Blair, President Jimmy Carter and First Lady  
6           Mary Flake de Flores.

7   **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

8           (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
9           the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-  
10          pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
11          for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold  
12          medal of appropriate design to Don and Deyon Stephens,  
13          Founders of Mercy Ships.

14          (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the  
15          presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
16          of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-  
17          retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,  
18          devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Sec-  
19          retary.

20   **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

21          The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
22          bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2  
23          under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at  
24          a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,

1 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,  
2 and the cost of the gold medal.

3 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-  
5 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter  
6 51 of title 31, United States Code.

7 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
8 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
9 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
10 items.

○