

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2740

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and
Urban Affairs

AN ACT

To posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Rabbi
Michael Ber Weissmandl in recognition of his acts of
valor during World War II.

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 “Rabbi Michael Ber
3 Weissmandl Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2017”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl was born in
7 Hungary on October 25, 1903, later moving to Slo-
8 vakia to study under Rabbi Shumel Dvoid Ungar in
9 Nitra.

10 (2) During his time in Nitra, he quickly became
11 a senior figure within the local Jewish community
12 and Yeshiva.

13 (3) Weissmandl was responsible for some of the
14 daring efforts to save the Jewish people of Slovakia
15 from the Holocaust, which include the establishment
16 of a “Working Group”, an underground organization
17 that raised funds to negotiate ransom with German
18 and Slovakian officials in order to delay mass depor-
19 tations.

20 (4) During the Nazi regime, Weissmandl used
21 his contacts from England to obtain visas, becoming
22 one of the first to actively protect people of Jewish
23 ancestry in Europe.

24 (5) Weissmandl also wrote telegrams to gen-
25 erate awareness of the Jewish people’s plight and
26 encouraged other strategic approaches to stop the

1 Holocaust, including the bombing of railroad tunnels
2 to prevent the transportation of persons to con-
3 centration camps.

4 (6) Weissmandl established a Working Group—
5 a wide variety of people from different political and
6 ideological spectrums—whose common goal was to
7 save people from the “Final Solution”.

8 (7) The Working Group was one of the first to
9 document in writing the accounts of Auschwitz
10 Escapees in a document widely referred to as the
11 “Auschwitz Protocols”.

12 (8) Weissmandl himself later translated the ini-
13 tial documentation from German to Hebrew and in-
14 cluded a widely known addendum that pleaded for
15 action.

16 (9) Weissmandl wrote the first known appeal
17 for the use of Allied air resources to disrupt the Hol-
18 ocaust.

19 (10) In 1942 when Slovakia started deportation
20 for “resettlement”, Rabbi Weissmandl was the first
21 to inform the Working Group that people were being
22 murdered and not sent to work as originally claimed.

23 (11) Rabbi Weissmandl also played an instru-
24 mental role in Solomon Schoenfeld Kindertransport
25 rescue, helping save hundreds of lives.

1 (12) Rabbi Weissmandl came to America and in
2 1945 immediately got to work to establish a home
3 and Yeshiva for Holocaust survivors. The Yeshiva of
4 Nitra he established in Mount Kisco, New York, was
5 the first Yeshiva campus in America and became
6 and example that other institutions followed.

7 (13) Rabbi Weissmandl has significantly influ-
8 enced the flourishing communities of Talmudic
9 scholars in Brooklyn, New York, and generally
10 across the United States.

11 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
13 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
14 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
15 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold
16 medal of appropriate design, to Rabbi Michael Ber
17 Weissmandl in recognition of his acts of valor during
18 World War II.

19 (b) PARTICIPATION BY WEISSMANDL COMMITTEE.—
20 For the purpose of the presentation referred to in sub-
21 section (a), the Speaker and President pro tempore shall
22 ensure that the Weissmandl Committee may accept the
23 medal on behalf of Michael Ber Weissmandl.

24 (c) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the
25 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary

1 of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the
2 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
3 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the
4 Secretary.

5 (d) TRANSFER OF MEDAL AFTER PRESENTATION.—
6 Following the presentation of the gold medal in honor of
7 Michael Ber Weissmandl under subsection (a), the gold
8 medal shall be given to Samuel Dovid Weissmandl or,
9 should he not be present, to Rabbi Menachem Meir
10 Weissmandl.

11 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

12 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
13 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
14 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 at
15 a price sufficient to cover the cost of the bronze medals
16 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and
17 overhead expenses) and the cost of the gold medal.

18 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDAL.**

19 (a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The gold medal struck
20 under this Act is a national medals for purposes of chapter
21 51 of title 31, United States Code.

22 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
23 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals

1 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
2 items.

Passed the House of Representatives November 13,
2018.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.