

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4045

To award a Congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2014

Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. BARBER, Ms. BASS, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATAH, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCIA, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. HAHN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HANNA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JONES, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. LANCE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCALLISTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. O’ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCARELL, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHOCK, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VELA, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATERS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska) 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 award a Congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

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 “First Rhode Island
5 Regiment Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) During the winter of Valley Forge, from
9 1777–1778, the Continental Army had difficulty re-
10 cruiting the necessary quotas of men set by the Con-
11 gress.

12 (2) At the same time, the State of Rhode Island
13 was ordered to supply two battalions while faced
14 with the occupation of the City of Newport by the
15 British.

16 (3) In January 1778, at the urging of Brigadier
17 General James Varnum, General George Washington
18 wrote to Governor Nicholas Cooke of the State of

1 Rhode Island requesting assistance recruiting men
2 for the Continental Line.

3 (4) On February 14, 1778, the Rhode Island
4 General Assembly voted to allow the enlistment of
5 “every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man
6 slave”.

7 (5) In addition, the Rhode Island General As-
8 sembly provided that any enlisted slave “upon his
9 passing muster before Colonel Christopher Greene,
10 be immediately discharged from the service of his
11 master or mistress, and be absolutely free as though
12 he had never been incumbered and be incumbered
13 with any kind of servitude or slavery.”.

14 (6) As a result, between February 1778 and
15 June 1778, Colonel Christopher Greene, Lt. Colonel
16 Jeremiah Olney and Major Samuel Ward recruited
17 almost 200 men of African and Native American de-
18 scent who formed the core of the First Rhode Island
19 Regiment.

20 (7) The First Rhode Island Regiment became
21 among the first units in American History in which
22 men of every race and ethnicity were recruited to
23 serve.

24 (8) On August 28, 1778, at the Battle of
25 Rhode Island, following an attempted siege of Brit-

1 ish-occupied Newport along with the newly allied
2 French fleet, the First Rhode Island Regiment acted
3 heroically in holding back Hessian forces and caus-
4 ing them to retreat.

5 (9) During the Battle of Rhode Island, the
6 First Rhode Island Regiment's losses included three
7 killed, nine wounded and eleven missing soldiers.

8 (10) For an additional 5 years, the First Rhode
9 Island Regiment fought bravely to win American
10 independence including at Fort Oswego, Saratoga,
11 and Yorktown.

12 (11) On June 13, 1783, at Saratoga, the First
13 Rhode Island Regiment was demobilized.

14 (12) Their commander, Colonel Jeremiah
15 Olney, praised the Regiment for "faithfully pre-
16 serving in the best of causes, in every stage of serv-
17 ice, with unexampled fortitude and patience through
18 all the danger and toils of a long and severe war".

19 (13) Afterwards, some veterans of the First
20 Rhode Island Regiment had to consistently resist ef-
21 forts at re-enslavement and fought for back wages
22 from the Rhode Island General Assembly.

23 (14) According to the Rhode Island State Ar-
24 chives, the First Rhode Island Regiment included at
25 least the following soldiers: Babcock, Priamus (Pri-

1 mus); Bent, Prince; Bours, Cato; Brown, Priamus
2 (Primus); Burk, Africa; Burroughs, John; Car-
3 penter, Cudgo; Champlin, Dick; Champlin, Jack;
4 Champlin, July; Champlin, Newport; Champlin,
5 Sharper; Champlin, York; Clark, James;
6 Coddington, Jack; Fones, Jack; Gardner, Cuff;
7 Gardner, Hercules; Gardner, Minkl; Gardner,
8 Preamus (Primus); Gardner, Rutter; Gray, Ebe-
9 nezer; Green, Cuff; Greene, Cato; Greene, Jack;
10 Greene, Pero; Greene, William; Hammond, Prince;
11 Harriss, Cesar; Hazard, Backus; Hazard, Jabin;
12 Hazard, Jacob; Hazard, Peter; Hazard, Peter;
13 Lefavour, Thom; Mason, Warsen; Mawney, Cyrus;
14 Minturn, Jack; Mowrey, Pero; Nichols, Thomas;
15 Perry, Ganset; Phillips, Philow; Pierce, Titus; Pot-
16 ter, David; Randall, Prince; Rhodes, Bristol; Rhodes,
17 Priamus; Rhodes, Richard; Rhodes, Samuel; Rich-
18 mond, Ebenezer; Robinson, Mingo; Rodman, Isaac;
19 Rodman, Mingo; Rodman, Prince; Rose, Cesar;
20 Saltonstall, Brittain; Saunders, Sampson; Sheldon,
21 Cesar; Slave; Slave; Smith, Juba; Sweeling, Query;
22 Talbot, Sigby; Tanner, Quam; Tillinghast, Cuff;
23 Updike, Cesar; Updike, Moses; Vaughan, Prince;
24 Vernon, Cato; Watson, Fortune; Wells, Cesar;
25 Wickes, Nat; and Willbour, Boston.

1 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
4 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
5 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
6 of appropriate design to the First Rhode Island Regiment,
7 collectively in recognition of their dedicated service during
8 the Revolutionary War.

9 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
10 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
11 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
12 retary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems,
13 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
14 retary.

15 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
17 gold medal in honor of the First Rhode Island Regi-
18 ment of the Revolutionary War under subsection (a),
19 the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian In-
20 stitution, where it will be displayed as appropriate
21 and made available for research.

22 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
23 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
24 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
25 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other

1 appropriate locations associated with the First
2 Rhode Island Regiment of the Revolutionary War.

3 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

4 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
5 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
6 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
7 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
8 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

9 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

10 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to
11 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
12 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
14 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
15 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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