

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1179

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal which they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking four decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to our country.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

Mr. SUOZZI (for himself, Mr. BACON, Mr. MOONEY, Mr. KILMER, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. TRONE, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. HUFFMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and the Budget, 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

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal which they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking four decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to our country.

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 “Iran Hostages Con-  
3 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) On January 20, 1981, United States dip-  
7 lomats, military personnel, and civilians were re-  
8 leased after being held hostage for 444 days by mili-  
9 tant student supporters of Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah  
10 Khomeini in a violation of international law. They  
11 were taken from the United States Embassy in  
12 Tehran, Iran, this came to be known as the Iran  
13 Hostage Crisis.

14 (2) The hostages were subjected to intense  
15 physical and psychological torture throughout their  
16 captivity, such as mock execution, beatings, solitary  
17 confinement, and inhospitable living conditions.

18 (3) Throughout their time held, they were rou-  
19 tinely told to denounce the United States, when they  
20 refused, they were tortured, yet they remained  
21 strong in their spirit.

22 (4) One hostage wrote “Viva la roja, blanco, y  
23 azul” which translates to “Long live the red, white,  
24 and blue” on the wall of his cell as a reminder of  
25 the values he swore to protect.

1           (5) The hostages showed extraordinary courage  
2           by continually engaging in acts of resistance against  
3           their captors in the face of gross violations of their  
4           human rights, such as refusing to sign condemna-  
5           tions of the United States.

6           (6) Many of the hostages still experience trau-  
7           ma as a result of the events of the crisis and deserve  
8           to have their suffering recognized.

9           (7) While 35 of the hostages are still living, it  
10          is important that we reflect on their resilience and  
11          strength which serve as an example to current gen-  
12          erations. Let us acknowledge them as heroes, who  
13          stood in positions of great tribulation but who, for  
14          us, endured so that we may know the blessing of  
15          being an American. Let us be more like them.

16          (8) On January 22, 1981, President Jimmy  
17          Carter met with the hostages in West Germany and  
18          stated, “One of the acts in my life which has been  
19          the most moving and gratifying in meeting with and  
20          discussing the future and the past with the now lib-  
21          erated Americans who were held hostage in Iran for  
22          so long. I pointed out to them that, since their cap-  
23          ture by the Iranian terrorists and their being held  
24          in this despicable act of savagery, that the American  
25          people’s hearts have gone out to them and the na-

1       tion has been united as perhaps never before in his-  
2       tory and that the prayers that have gone up from  
3       the people throughout the world to God for their  
4       safety have finally been answered.”.

5           (9) On January 28, 1981, when welcoming the  
6       hostages home, President Ronald Reagan stated,  
7       “You’ve come home to a people who for 444 days  
8       suffered the pain of your imprisonment, prayed for  
9       your safety, and most importantly, shared your de-  
10      termination that the spirit of free men and women  
11      is not a fit subject for barter. You’ve represented  
12      under great stress the highest traditions of public  
13      service. Your conduct is symbolic of the millions of  
14      professional diplomats, military personnel, and oth-  
15      ers who have rendered service to their country.”.

16          (10) During the 444 days the brave Americans  
17      were held, the rest of the country held its breath,  
18      waiting for news of the hostages. The country hoped  
19      and prayed together, as one, for the hostages’ safe  
20      return.

21          (11) United States Ambassador to Iran from  
22      1979 to 1980 Bruce Laingen, the highest ranking  
23      diplomat held hostage, summed up the experience by  
24      saying “Fifty-three Americans who will always have  
25      a love affair with this country and who join with you

1 in a prayer of thanksgiving for the way in which this  
2 crisis has strengthened the spirit and resilience and  
3 strength that is the mark of a truly free society.”.  
4 It is now our responsibility to honor the spirit, resil-  
5 ience, and strength that the hostages displayed dur-  
6 ing their 444 days of imprisonment.

7 (12) Now, more than four decades later, we  
8 continue to honor the hostages. The recipients of  
9 this award are heroes in every sense of the word.  
10 They are role models that wore their American pride  
11 with esteem and have allowed for subsequent genera-  
12 tions to appreciate the blessing of being an Amer-  
13 ican. Today, as we prepare to mark 40 years after  
14 their release, we acknowledge their endurance,  
15 strength, and contributions to seeing a more peace-  
16 ful world. They suffered for America and now it is  
17 our duty to recognize them for it.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

19 In this Act, the term “hostage” means an American  
20 that was taken captive on November 4, 1979, in Tehran,  
21 Iran, at the United States embassy and released on—

- 22 (1) July 11, 1980; or  
23 (2) January 20, 1981.

1 **SEC. 4. 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 Congress, of a single gold medal of  
6 appropriate design to the 53 hostages of the Iran Hostage  
7 Crisis, in recognition of their bravery and endurance  
8 throughout their captivity which started on November 4,  
9 1979, and lasted until January 21, 1981.

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

15 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the  
17 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal  
18 shall be given to the National Museum of American  
19 History of the Smithsonian Institution, where it  
20 shall be available for display as appropriate and  
21 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 loan, as appropriate, so that the medal  
26 may be displayed elsewhere.

1 **SEC. 5. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 (a) SILVER DUPLICATE MEDALS.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall strike  
4 duplicates in silver of the gold medal struck pursu-  
5 ant to section 4 to be awarded in accordance with  
6 paragraph.

7 (2) ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARD.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—A hostage shall be eli-  
9 gible to be awarded a silver duplicate medal  
10 struck under paragraph (1) in recognition of  
11 the endurance of the Iran Hostages.

12 (B) DEATH OF A HOSTAGE.—In the event  
13 of the death of a hostage who has not been  
14 awarded a silver duplicate medal under this  
15 subsection, the Secretary may award a silver  
16 duplicate medal to the next of kin or other per-  
17 sonal representative of the hostage.

18 (b) BRONZE DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The Secretary  
19 may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal  
20 struck pursuant to section 4 under such regulations as the  
21 Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the  
22 cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of ma-  
23 chinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold  
24 and silver medals.

1 **SEC. 6. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

8 **SEC. 7. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.**

9 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of  
10 complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,  
11 shall be determined by reference to the latest statement  
12 titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this  
13 Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record  
14 by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-  
15 vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the  
16 vote on passage.

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