

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2723

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Rabbi Arthur Schneier in recognition of his pioneering role in promoting religious freedom and human rights throughout the world, for close to half a century.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2015

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Rabbi Arthur Schneier in recognition of his pioneering role in promoting religious freedom and human rights throughout the world, for close to half a century.

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 “Rabbi Arthur Schneier
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Rabbi Arthur Schneier, Spiritual Leader of
2 Park East Synagogue and Founder and President,
3 Appeal of Conscience Foundation, has played a pio-
4 neering role in promoting religious freedom and
5 human rights throughout the world, for close to half
6 a century.

7 (2) The President of the United States awarded
8 him the Presidential Citizens Medal for “his service
9 as an international envoy for four administrations”
10 and as a Holocaust survivor, “devoting a lifetime to
11 overcoming forces of hatred and intolerance”.

12 (3) He received the United States Department
13 of State Special Recognition Award from Secretary
14 Colin Powell for “. . . his ecumenical work in favor
15 of mutual understanding, tolerance and peace . . .”.

16 (4) In China in 2004, he headed an interfaith
17 Appeal of Conscience Foundation delegation which
18 met with government officials on behalf of religious
19 freedom and strengthened exchanges between reli-
20 gious communities in China and the United States.

21 (5) He has regularly led delegations of religious
22 leaders to China since the early 1980s.

23 (6) In the Former Soviet Union, Rabbi
24 Schneier was, in 2004, the keynote speaker at the

1 Interreligious Conference on Peace hosted by Patri-
2 arch Aleksey II.

3 (7) In Armenia in 2002, he held meetings with
4 the Catholicos of all Armenians and government
5 leaders to help ease tensions between Armenia and
6 Turkey.

7 (8) He convened the Religious Summit on the
8 Former Yugoslavia in Switzerland and the Conflict
9 Resolution Conference in Vienna, mobilizing Catho-
10 lic, Muslim, and Orthodox Christian religious leaders
11 to halt the bloodshed in former Yugoslavia (1992,
12 1995).

13 (9) In the Balkans, Caucasus, and Central
14 Asia, he initiated the Peace and Tolerance Con-
15 ference in Istanbul, Turkey, in cooperation with the
16 Turkish Government and the Ecumenical Patriarch
17 Bartholomew I (1994).

18 (10) In Bosnia-Herzegovina, he met with top
19 government and religious leaders in Sarajevo to pro-
20 mote healing and conciliation between the Serbian
21 Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic, and Jewish commu-
22 nities (1997).

23 (11) Rabbi Schneier initiated the interfaith ap-
24 peal to the United Nations for the worldwide protec-
25 tion of holy sites, which was adopted by the United

1 Nations General Assembly in May 2001 as the reso-
2 lution for the “Protection of Religious Sites”.

3 (12) In 1980, he initiated the Annual Seminar
4 on Religious Life to educate Foreign Service officers
5 in the religious traditions of the countries of their
6 assignment.

7 (13) The Foreign Service Institute honored him
8 in 2001 for “20 years of excellent cooperation in
9 furthering the objective of religious freedom”.

10 (14) He was awarded the Department of State
11 Special Recognition Award from Secretary of State
12 Hillary Clinton “for his 30 years of partnership in
13 helping Foreign Affairs professionals to better un-
14 derstand the right to religious freedom in the coun-
15 tries in which they serve”.

16 (15) He has been very active in humanitarian
17 missions, such as mobilizing the American religious
18 community in support for the victims of the Arme-
19 nian and Turkish earthquakes and Romanian floods.

20 (16) A United States Alternate Representative
21 to the United Nations General Assembly and Chair-
22 man of the United States Commission for the Pres-
23 ervation of America’s Heritage Abroad, he was one
24 of 3 American religious leaders appointed by the
25 President of the United States to start the first dia-

1 logue on religious freedom with President Jiang
2 Zemin and other top Chinese leaders (1998).

3 (17) He was a United States delegate to the
4 Stockholm International Forum for the Prevention
5 of Genocide (2004).

6 (18) Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1930, Rabbi
7 Schneier lived under Nazi occupation in Budapest
8 during World War II and arrived in the United
9 States in 1947.

10 (19) He holds the Ordination and Doctor of Di-
11 vinity Degree from Yeshiva University.

12 (20) In 2004, Yeshiva University honored him
13 by establishing the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center
14 for International Affairs.

15 (21) He hosted Pope Benedict XVI at Park
16 East Synagogue, the first visit of a Pope to a syna-
17 gogue in the United States (2008), and the Ecu-
18 menical Patriarch Bartholomew (2009).

19 (22) He was invited by King Abdullah of Saudi
20 Arabia as a keynote to the Interfaith Conference
21 (Madrid) (2008).

22 (23) He was appointed by the UN Secretary
23 General to the High Level Group “Alliance of Civili-
24 zations” (2005) and he was appointed Ambassador
25 of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (2009).

1 (24) He was honored with the Knight Com-
2 mander of the Order of Civil Merit by the Kingdom
3 of Spain, Officer of the Order of the Légion
4 d'honneur of France, Officer's Cross of the Order of
5 Merit of Germany, Grand Decoration of Honor in
6 Gold with Star for Service to the Republic of Aus-
7 tria, Order of the Republic of Hungary, Officer's
8 Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Po-
9 land, the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity,
10 Grand Decoration of Honor in Gold for Special
11 Services to the Province of Vienna.

12 (25) He received the Order of St. Daniel of
13 Moscow, for "his leadership in inter-religious co-
14 operation and the strengthening of ties between
15 American religious communities and the Russian Or-
16 thodox Church" (2004).

17 (26) He was selected Friend of the Armenians
18 for his "solidarity with Armenians in the cause of
19 human rights".

20 (27) He received the Order of St. Andrew the
21 Apostle Athenagoras Human Rights Award for "his
22 contributions to the improvement of tolerance and
23 peace among all religions throughout the world"
24 (2008).

1 (28) He received the Guru Nanac Interfaith
2 Prize, Hofstra University for “fostering religious tol-
3 erance and cooperation” (2010).

4 (29) He was the recipient of eleven honorary
5 doctorates from United States and foreign univer-
6 sities.

7 **SEC. 3. 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 the Congress, of a gold
12 medal of appropriate design to Rabbi Arthur Schneier in
13 recognition of his pioneering role in promoting religious
14 freedom and human rights throughout the world, for close
15 to half a century.

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

22 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

23 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
24 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
25 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at

1 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
2 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
3 and the cost of the gold medal.

4 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

5 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
6 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
7 51 of title 31, United States Code.

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

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