

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 438

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Joanne King Herring and posthumously to each of Charles “Charlie” Wilson and Gustav Lascaris “Gust” Avrakotos, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to the country.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 21, 2015

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. McCAUL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Ms. DELAURO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

---

## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Joanne King Herring and posthumously to each of Charles “Charlie” Wilson and Gustav Lascaris “Gust” Avrakotos, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to the country.

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 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Charlie Wilson, Gust Avrakotos and Joanne  
6 King Herring played a critical role in ending the So-  
7 viet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, which ulti-

1 mately was a factor leading to the collapse of the  
2 Soviet Union.

3 (2) Charlie Wilson was elected to Congress in  
4 1972 from the 2nd Congressional District of Texas  
5 and served until he retired in 1996. He was a mem-  
6 ber of the House Appropriations Committee.

7 (3) Gust Avrakotos joined the Central Intel-  
8 ligence Agency (“CIA”) in 1962 and his assign-  
9 ments included a mission in Greece and duty in the  
10 CIA’s Langley, Virginia, headquarters. While at  
11 Langley, Gust Avrakotos oversaw the largest covert  
12 operation in the CIA’s history to defeat the Soviet  
13 Union in Afghanistan.

14 (4) Joanne King Herring is a private citizen  
15 and humanitarian who currently resides in Houston,  
16 Texas.

17 (5) A few months after the Soviet invasion of  
18 Afghanistan in 1979, Joanne King Herring risked  
19 her life by traveling to Afghanistan to film the atroc-  
20 ities that the Soviet soldiers were inflicting on the  
21 Afghan people.

22 (6) Joanne King Herring shared her film with  
23 prominent current and former public officials, in-  
24 cluding then Vice President George H.W. Bush,  
25 then CIA chief William Casey and Henry Kissinger.

1           (7) Congressman Charlie Wilson was a vocal  
2           opponent of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and  
3           secured appropriations over several years for the  
4           CIA's covert operation to fund the Afghan resist-  
5           ance.

6           (8) Joanne King Herring arranged for Charlie  
7           Wilson to travel with her to Pakistan to visit Afghan  
8           refugee camps in 1982. After witnessing the physical  
9           harm caused by the Soviets to the Afghan people,  
10          Charlie Wilson was further determined to secure  
11          funding for the resistance movement.

12          (9) In 1984, CIA officer Gustav Avrakotos con-  
13          tacted Charlie Wilson, breaking the CIA's policy  
14          against lobbying Congress for money, and asked  
15          Wilson for additional funding to support the CIA's  
16          covert operation in Afghanistan, which Gustav  
17          Avrakotos was leading.

18          (10) The covert operation was successful and  
19          the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in  
20          1989.

21          (11) The heroic efforts of Charlie Wilson, Jo-  
22          anne King Herring and Gustav Avrakotos played a  
23          key role in leading to the collapse of the Soviet  
24          Union in 1991.

1 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
3 the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tem-  
4 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
5 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold  
6 medal of appropriate design to Joanne King Herring, and  
7 posthumous presentation of such a medal to each of  
8 Charles “Charlie” Wilson and Gustav Lascaris “Gust”  
9 Avrakotos, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and  
10 service to the country.

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

17 (c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the presentation  
18 of the gold medals referred to in subsection (a), the medals  
19 for Charles Wilson and Gustav Avrakotos shall be awarded  
20 respectively to Barbara Ablerstadt Wilson and Claudette  
21 M. Avrakotos, the wives of the deceased.

22 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

23 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
24 bronze of the gold medals struck pursuant to section 2  
25 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at  
26 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 medals.

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

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to  
5 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51  
6 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 numismatic  
10 items.

○