

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5561

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to former United States Senator
Max Cleland.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 22, 2016

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia (for himself, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to former United
States Senator Max Cleland.

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 “Max Cleland Congres-
5 sional Gold Medal Act of 2016”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Joseph Maxwell “Max” Cleland has dem-
9 onstrated the highest degree of professionalism and

1 has served as an inspiration to friends, family, vet-
2 erans, and many others while dedicating his life to
3 the public service of the United States.

4 (2) Max Cleland began his career in public serv-
5 ice when he joined the Reserve Officers' Training
6 Corps as a young college student, went on active
7 duty in the United States Army (in this section re-
8 ferred to as the "Army") in 1965 as a Second Lieu-
9 tenant, and volunteered for service in Vietnam, ris-
10 ing to the rank of Captain.

11 (3) The Army recognized Max Cleland with a
12 Silver Star for his gallantry in action during the
13 Battle of Khe Sanh in April of 1968. According to
14 the letter of commendation from the Army, "The
15 President of the United States of America, author-
16 ized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by
17 Act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting
18 the Silver Star to Captain (Signal Corps) Joseph
19 Maxwell Cleland, United States Army, for gallantry
20 in action while engaged in military operations involv-
21 ing conflict with an armed hostile force in the Re-
22 public of Vietnam."

23 (4) Max Cleland, a Battalion Signal Officer dis-
24 patched to set up a radio relay antenna, was severely
25 wounded on the battlefield and, as a result, lost both

1 of his legs and his right arm. Cleland would endure
2 18 months of extremely difficult rehabilitation and
3 recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and
4 hospitals of the Department of Veterans Affairs (in
5 this section referred to as “VA hospitals”) in Wash-
6 ington, DC. In 1969, Cleland testified before the
7 Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate on the
8 hardships faced by veterans returning home from
9 war.

10 (5) Upon returning to Georgia, Max Cleland
11 was determined to continue his public service and, in
12 1970, at the age of 28, was elected as the youngest
13 Georgia State senator and helped pass legislation to
14 make public facilities accessible for veterans, older
15 people, and individuals with disabilities.

16 (6) Max Cleland later came to Washington, DC
17 and joined the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Af-
18 fairs as a professional staff member, investigating
19 VA hospitals across the country and the treatment
20 of servicemembers returning from Vietnam.

21 (7) In 1977, President Jimmy Carter named
22 Max Cleland, then just 34 years old, the youngest
23 ever individual and first Vietnam veteran to serve as
24 Administrator of the Veterans Administration. As
25 Administrator, Cleland helped create the “Vet Cen-

1 ter” counseling program, which later expanded to
2 300 facilities nationwide helping veterans and their
3 families receive psychological care for post-traumatic
4 stress disorders and other problems associated with
5 warfare.

6 (8) Following his term as Administrator of the
7 Veterans Administration, Max Cleland returned to
8 elective office in 1982 when he was elected as Sec-
9 retary of State of the State of Georgia. As Secretary
10 of State, Cleland implemented the National Voter
11 Registration Act of 1993 (52 U.S.C. 20501 et seq.)
12 in Georgia and added almost 1,000,000 new voters
13 to the rolls.

14 (9) Max Cleland was elected to the United
15 States Senate in 1996 and would go on to chair the
16 Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on
17 Armed Services of the Senate. In the Senate,
18 Cleland was known for his work in expanding bene-
19 fits for servicemembers and in improving veterans’
20 health care, education, and the environment.

21 (10) After his service in the Senate, Max
22 Cleland continued his distinguished career in public
23 service by becoming a commissioner on the National
24 Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United
25 States (commonly referred to as the “9/11 Commis-

1 sion”) and later as a member of the Board of Direc-
2 tors of the Export-Import Bank of the United
3 States.

4 (11) In 2009, President Barack Obama named
5 Max Cleland Secretary of the American Battle
6 Monuments Commission. As Secretary of the Com-
7 mission, Cleland is charged with commemorating
8 both the permanent cemeteries of the United States
9 located in foreign countries and the military memo-
10 rials, monuments, and markers demonstrating where
11 members of the United States Armed Forces have
12 served overseas since World War I.

13 (12) In 2010, President Obama again called on
14 Max Cleland to serve his country and Cleland again
15 accepted. This time, Cleland agreed to serve as co-
16 chair, and eventually the inaugural chair, of the Ad-
17 visory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery,
18 which was established to help fix the problems facing
19 the final resting place for many of the heroes of the
20 United States. After his tenure as chair, Cleland was
21 awarded the Decoration for Distinguished Civilian
22 Service of the Army, the highest honorary award
23 that the Secretary of the Army can confer on a civil-
24 ian.

1 (13) After overcoming some of the most dif-
2 ficult challenges imaginable, Max Cleland has spent
3 almost five decades of his life in service to the
4 United States and the country is forever indebted to
5 his service.

6 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

7 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
8 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
9 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
10 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold
11 medal of appropriate design to Joseph Maxwell “Max”
12 Cleland.

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

18 (c) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Under such regulations as
20 the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may
21 strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal
22 struck under this Act at a price sufficient to cover
23 the costs of the medals, including labor, materials,
24 dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

1 (2) SALE OF DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The
2 amounts received from the sale of duplicate medals
3 under paragraph (1) shall be deposited in the United
4 States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

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

6 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
7 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
8 31, United States Code.

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

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