

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6672

To award a Congressional Gold Medal posthumously to Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor in recognition of his significance to the nation as an athlete, trailblazer, role model, and equal rights advocate.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 7, 2023

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois (for himself, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. CARSON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. TRONE, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. DUARTE, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. LIEU, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. FROST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal posthumously to Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor in recognition of his significance to the nation as an athlete, trailblazer, role model, and equal rights advocate.

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 as the “Marshall ‘Major’
3 Taylor Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor was born
7 in Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 26, 1878, to
8 Black parents who likely had been enslaved in Ken-
9 tucky, and died impoverished on June 21, 1932, in
10 a hospital charity ward in Chicago, Illinois.

11 (2) As a child, Taylor spent considerable time
12 at the home of a wealthy White family in Indianap-
13 olis who employed his father as a coachman, treated
14 the Black youngster as an equal to their son, Daniel
15 Southard, and gave Taylor his first bicycle.

16 (3) Taylor acquired the nickname “Major” in
17 his youth when he performed bicycle tricks outside
18 his workplace, the Hay & Willits bike shop in Indi-
19 anapolis, while wearing a military-style jacket, and
20 he won his first bike race in 1890 at age 11.

21 (4) Taylor moved to Worcester, Massachusetts,
22 with his employer, mentor, and racing manager,
23 Louis D. “Birdie” Munger, in 1895, and became
24 known in his sport not only for his lightning sprints
25 but also for his good sportsmanship, disciplined
26 physical training, and devotion to his religion.

1 (5) Taylor received a professional racing license
2 from the League of American Wheelmen at age 18
3 despite the League’s 1894 “whites only” rule for
4 amateur membership and made his professional
5 debut in December 1896 in a six-day race at Madi-
6 son Square Garden in New York, New York, defeat-
7 ing national champion Eddie Bald in a half-mile ex-
8 hibition race on the eve of the six-day endurance
9 contest and placing eighth in the six-day track cy-
10 cling competition.

11 (6) In 1897, Taylor earned a spot alongside 4
12 White men on one of the first racially integrated
13 professional sports teams in the nation, a five-man
14 squad that won a Boston vs. Philadelphia pursuit
15 race held in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

16 (7) Taylor set numerous world speed records
17 and held 7 world records at the end of 1898 for var-
18 ious distances, including the coveted 1 mile, and he
19 further lowered the 1-mile world record to 1 minute,
20 19 seconds in 1899.

21 (8) Taylor overcame racial prejudice throughout
22 his career, showing remarkable dignity in the face of
23 closed doors and open hostility, including race-based
24 denial of meals and lodging; racist cartoons and
25 caricatures; bureaucratic maneuvers that threatened

1 his racing eligibility; race-based exclusion from cer-
2 tain tracks and competitions on the national circuit;
3 White opponents' plots and tactics to box him in on
4 the track, cause him to crash, or prevent him from
5 competing in the first place; a post-race choking by
6 a competitor on a racetrack in Taunton, Massachu-
7 setts, that left Taylor unconscious; White neighbors'
8 objections to his purchase of a house in Worcester;
9 and a death threat signed "White Riders" that was
10 delivered in Savannah, Georgia.

11 (9) Taylor was one of the first Black athletes
12 to secure corporate sponsorship, representing bicycle
13 brands such as Iver Johnson, Sager, Stearns, and
14 Orient, and he became one of the wealthiest Black
15 men in America and a substantial benefactor to his
16 church in Worcester.

17 (10) Taylor pioneered the use of an innovative
18 adjustable handlebar stem, using the extension to
19 improve his aerodynamic position, and to this day
20 this type of outrigger is called a Major Taylor stem.

21 (11) Taylor won the world 1-mile sprint cham-
22 pionship in Montreal on August 10, 1899, becoming
23 the second Black athlete to win a world title in any
24 sport, and won the United States championship later
25 that year.

1 (12) As a devout Christian, Taylor refused for
2 years to race on Sundays, and accordingly he turned
3 down lucrative offers to race in Europe, until, by vir-
4 tue of his international superstardom, he could nego-
5 tiate a “no Sundays” provision in a European racing
6 contract for 1901.

7 (13) Finding refuge in France, where he was
8 still often the only Black racer on the track, Taylor
9 defeated every European champion during the
10 course of six tours of Europe from 1901 to 1909
11 and also had numerous racing successes in Australia
12 and New Zealand.

13 (14) After retiring from racing in 1910 and
14 finding little success in the business world, Taylor
15 wrote his 1928 autobiography, “The Fastest Bicycle
16 Rider in the World,” with an appeal for “simple jus-
17 tice, equal rights, and a square deal” for African
18 Americans in sports and “every . . . human endeav-
19 or,” as well as advice for youth on good sportsman-
20 ship and clean living.

21 (15) Drawing on exemplary determination and
22 perseverance, Taylor demonstrated not only domi-
23 nant athletic prowess but also tremendous strength
24 of character as he broke racial barriers, reached the

1 pinnacle of international sport, and served as a role
2 model for generations to come.

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

4 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
5 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
6 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
7 for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of the Con-
8 gress, of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemo-
9 ration of Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor, in recognition
10 of his significance to the nation as an athlete, trailblazer,
11 role model, and equal rights advocate.

12 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
13 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
14 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
15 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
16 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
17 retary. The design shall bear an image of, and inscription
18 of the name of Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor.

19 (c) DISPOSITION OF MEDAL.—Following the award
20 of the gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
21 shall be given to the great-granddaughter of Marshall
22 Walter “Major” Taylor, Karen Donovan.

23 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

24 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
25 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 at

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

3 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

7 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
8 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
9 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
10 items.

11 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
12 **SALE.**

13 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
14 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
15 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-
16 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant
17 to this Act.

18 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—The amounts received
19 from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under
20 section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint
21 Public Enterprise Fund.

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