

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1514

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Elouise Pepion Cobell, in recognition of her outstanding and enduring contributions to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and the Nation through her tireless pursuit of justice.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. AKAKA, and Mr. INOUE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Elouise Pepion Cobell, in recognition of her outstanding and enduring contributions to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and the Nation through her tireless pursuit of justice.

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 The Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Elouise Pepion Cobell was born on the
6 Blackfeet Reservation on November 5, 1945, with
7 the Indian name “Little Bird Woman”.

1 (2) Elouise Cobell is a citizen of the Blackfeet
2 Nation and the great-granddaughter of Mountain
3 Chief, a legendary Indian leader.

4 (3) In 1996, Elouise Cobell filed an historic
5 lawsuit against the Federal Government, seeking
6 justice for the Government's failure to account for
7 billions of dollars received in trust by the United
8 States for the benefit of 500,000 individual Indians.

9 (4) Throughout the prosecution of the suit that
10 bears her name, Elouise Cobell led the charge
11 against governmental malfeasance, and displayed
12 unyielding resilience in her pursuit of justice for this
13 Nation's most vulnerable population.

14 (5) After a more than 15-year, tenacious fight
15 with the Government, Elouise Cobell agreed to settle
16 the lawsuit in December 2009 for \$3,400,000,000,
17 making it the largest settlement with the Govern-
18 ment in American History.

19 (6) Education of young people has long been a
20 priority for Elouise Cobell. To provide educational
21 opportunities for Indian children, Elouise Cobell cre-
22 ated, as part of the lawsuit settlement, a scholarship
23 fund that will help Indian youth to access higher
24 education, academic as well as vocational.

1 (7) Elouise Cobell is the recipient of many
2 awards and honors. In 1997, she received a “Genius
3 Grant” from the John D. and Catherine T. Mac-
4 Arthur Foundation’s Fellows program, a portion of
5 which was used to fund her lawsuit. Elouise Cobell
6 received the 2002 International Women’s Forum
7 award for “Women Who Make a Difference” in
8 Mexico City. In 2004, the National Center for Amer-
9 ican Indian Enterprise Development presented her
10 with the Jay Silverheels Achievement Award. A year
11 later, she received a Cultural Freedom Fellowship
12 from the Lannan Foundation, an award that cited
13 her persistence in bringing to light the “more than
14 a century of Government malfeasance and dishon-
15 esty” in the Government’s mismanagement of the
16 Individual Indian Trust. In 2007, she received an
17 AARP Impact Award, and in 2011 Elouise Cobell
18 was named “Montana Citizen of the Year” by the
19 Montana Trial Lawyers Association. She has re-
20 ceived honorary degrees from Montana State Univer-
21 sity, Rollins College, and Dartmouth College.

22 (8) Elouise Cobell is a respected leader in In-
23 dian Country for civic and economic development.
24 For 13 years, she served her own tribal community
25 as treasurer for the Blackfeet Nation, and has

1 served on a number of Native American organiza-
2 tional boards, including the board of trustees for the
3 National Museum of the American Indian. Her con-
4 tributions to economic development in Indian Coun-
5 try are substantial, not the least of which is her role
6 in the establishment and management of the Native
7 American Bank.

8 (9) As a Montanan, Elouise Cobell has stayed
9 invested in issues affecting the Montana community
10 by serving as a trustee for the Nature Conservancy
11 of Montana, while also working her own ranch that
12 produces cattle and crops.

13 (10) Elouise Cobell has changed immeasurably
14 the lives of individual Indians and women in the
15 United States, North America, and around the world
16 through her advocacy efforts to obtain justice for the
17 often overlooked population of indigenous peoples.

18 (11) Elouise Cobell's life and work has shined
19 light on the barriers confronted by individual Indi-
20 ans in the United States, and her actions not only
21 raise the national awareness of these issues, they re-
22 solve them.

23 (12) Elouise Cobell is an inspiration to women,
24 individual American Indians and Alaska Natives,

1 and advocates who seek to give voice to the voiceless
2 and most vulnerable across the globe.

3 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

4 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is
5 authorized to present, on behalf of the Congress, a gold
6 medal of appropriate design to Elouise Pepion Cobell in
7 recognition of her outstanding and enduring contributions
8 to the welfare of individual Indians in the United States
9 and her inspiration to indigenous peoples across the globe.

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

16 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

17 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
18 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2
19 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,
20 and at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, includ-
21 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead ex-
22 penses, and the cost of the gold medal.

1 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

2 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national
3 medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United
4 States Code.

5 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
6 **OF SALE.**

7 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
8 authorized to be charged against the Numismatic Public
9 Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay
10 for the cost of the medal authorized by this Act.

11 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
12 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
13 deposited in the Numismatic Public Enterprise Fund.

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