

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1715

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to all Gold Star Families in recognition of their sacrifice and service to the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 4, 2019

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. KAINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to all Gold Star Families in recognition of their sacrifice and service to the United States.

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 “Gold Star Families
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The fortitude of Gold Star Families in the
2 midst of tragedy strengthen the resolve of the
3 United States.

4 (2) Since World War I, military families have
5 used Gold Stars to memorialize their family mem-
6 ber's sacrifice on behalf of the country, represent the
7 devotion and pride of the family in this sacrifice,
8 and glorify rather than grieve their military service.

9 (3) Gold Stars were first used by military fami-
10 lies during World War I.

11 (4) When a family member passed away during
12 their service, families would place a Gold Star on
13 their Service Flag to represent the sacrifice the fam-
14 ily had paid in the cause of freedom.

15 (5) On May 28, 1918, President Wilson ap-
16 proved a suggestion made by the Women's Com-
17 mittee of the Council of National Defenses that, in-
18 stead of wearing conventional mourning garb for rel-
19 atives who passed away during their military service,
20 women would wear a black band with a gilt star on
21 their left arm to signify each member of the family
22 who gave their life for the United States.

23 (6) In 1928, 25 mothers of fallen
24 servicemembers worked together to establish a na-
25 tional organization to support those who had lost

1 their children during the war, which was known as
2 the American Gold Star Mothers Inc. and officially
3 incorporated in January 1929.

4 (7) Since September 1936, the United States
5 has observed various recognized dates to support
6 Gold Star Families and honor the legacy of fallen
7 heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

8 (8) In 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt helped to estab-
9 lish Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., a national or-
10 ganization to support the families left behind by the
11 fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces
12 who died on active duty or as a result of a service-
13 connected disability.

14 (9) In August 1947, Congress authorized the
15 issuance of gold star lapel pins to families who lost
16 a loved one in combat.

17 (10) The extraordinary contribution of Gold
18 Star Families is beyond measure, not merely for
19 their loss, but the comfort they selflessly provide
20 others and their model of service and sacrifice.

21 (11) Through their service, Gold Star Families
22 keep alive the spirit of patriotism and love of coun-
23 try and promote peace and good will for the United
24 States and all other countries.

1 (12) Gold Star Families continue to perpetuate
2 the memory of those who fought and died on behalf
3 of the United States.

4 (13) Gold Star Families embody the purpose of
5 the Congressional Gold Medal of honoring distin-
6 guished contributions, recognizing virtues of patriot-
7 ism, and remembering momentous occasions in his-
8 tory.

9 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act, the term “Gold Star Family” includes
11 any individual described in section 3.2 of Department of
12 Defense Instruction 1348.36.

13 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

14 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tem-
15 pore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
16 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the
17 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
18 appropriate design to all Gold Star Families in recognition
19 of their dedication, contributions, and sacrifice to the
20 United States.

21 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
22 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary shall
23 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
24 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

25 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
2 gold medal in honor of Gold Star Families, the gold
3 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,
4 where it will be available for display as appropriate
5 and made available for research.

6 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
7 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
8 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
9 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
10 appropriate locations associated with Gold Star
11 Families.

12 (d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Under regulations that the
14 Secretary may promulgate, the Secretary may strike
15 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal
16 struck under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover
17 the costs of the medals, including labor, materials,
18 dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

19 (2) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—The amounts re-
20 ceived from the sale of duplicate medals under para-
21 graph (1) shall be deposited in the United States
22 Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
3 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
4 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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