

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 450

To award posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal to Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HAWLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal to Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley.

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 “Emmett Till and
5 Mamie Till-Mobley Congressional Gold Medal Act of
6 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The brutal lynching of Emmett Till and the
4 subsequent bravery and boldness of his mother,
5 Mamie Till-Mobley, became a catalyst for the civil
6 rights movement.

7 (2) On August 28, 1955, 14-year-old Emmett
8 Till was kidnapped, beaten, and shot in Money, Mis-
9 sissippi, where he had traveled from Chicago to stay
10 with his great uncle, Moses Wright.

11 (3) The corpse of Emmett Till was discovered
12 3 days later in the Tallahatchie River and his mur-
13 derers were acquitted despite Moses Wright pro-
14 viding an eyewitness testimony that the men on trial
15 kidnapped Emmett Till.

16 (4) Mamie Till-Mobley, the mother of Emmett
17 Till, demonstrated her love for her son and her cour-
18 age and strength in suffering in the days that fol-
19 lowed as she brought the body of Emmett Till back
20 to Chicago for burial and demanded an open casket
21 funeral, which drew more than 50,000 attendees.

22 (5) Mamie Till-Mobley further allowed a photo-
23 graph to be taken of Emmett Till in his casket,
24 which was shown throughout the world.

25 (6) The original casket of Emmett Till stands
26 on display at the National Museum of African Amer-

1 ican History and Culture as an enduring reminder
2 of the racial violence that is a part of the history of
3 the United States that the people of the United
4 States must confront.

5 (7) The heroic actions of Mamie Till-Mobley in
6 the midst of evil, injustice, and grief became a cata-
7 lyst for the civil rights movement and continued in
8 the years to come as she worked for justice and hon-
9 ored the legacy of Emmett Till.

10 (8) Mamie Till-Mobley went on to create the
11 Emmett Till Players, which was a significant na-
12 tional cultural contribution as teenagers traveled
13 throughout the country presenting Martin Luther
14 King, Jr., speeches in the name of Emmett Till.

15 (9) Mamie Till-Mobley also served as chair and
16 co-founder of the Emmett Till Justice Campaign,
17 which had the dual mission of reopening the murder
18 of Emmett Till for a reinvestigation and a passage
19 into law of Federal legislation to ensure that other
20 racially motivated murders during the civil rights era
21 were investigated and, when possible, prosecuted.

22 (10) The efforts of the Emmett Till Justice
23 Campaign led to the successful joint investigation by
24 the State of Mississippi, the Federal Bureau of In-
25 vestigation, and the Department of Justice in 2004,

1 the passage of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil
2 Rights Crime Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–344;
3 122 Stat. 3934), signed into law by President
4 George W. Bush, and the Emmett Till Unsolved
5 Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act of 2016
6 (Public Law 114–325; 130 Stat. 1965), signed into
7 law by President Barack Obama.

8 (11) The people of the United States honor the
9 legacy of Emmett Till and the incredible suffering
10 and equally incredible courage, resilience, and efforts
11 of Mamie Till-Mobley that led to the civil rights
12 movement that began in the 1950s.

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

14 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
15 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
16 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
17 for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of Congress,
18 of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration
19 of Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley.

20 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
21 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
22 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
23 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
24 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
25 retary.

1 (c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—After the award of the gold
3 medal referred to in subsection (a), the gold medal
4 shall be given to the National Museum of African
5 American History and Culture, where it shall be dis-
6 played as appropriate.

7 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
8 Congress that the National Museum of African
9 American History and Culture should make the gold
10 medal received under paragraph (1) available for
11 display elsewhere, particularly at other locations and
12 events associated with Emmett Till and Mamie Till-
13 Mobley.

14 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

15 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
16 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
17 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
18 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
19 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

20 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

21 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
22 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
23 31, United States Code.

1 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
2 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
3 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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