

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 668

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins to honor and memorialize the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion of 1865.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2023

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins to honor and memorialize the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion of 1865.

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 “Sultana Steamboat
5 Disaster Commemorative Coin Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) On April 27, 1865, the Sultana, a Mis-
9 sissippi River paddlewheel steamboat, exploded kill-

1 ing nearly 1,200 of the 2,137 passengers and crew
2 on board. Based on the number of recorded casual-
3 ties, this event is the worst maritime disaster in
4 United States history.

5 (2) Those aboard the boat were mostly paroled
6 Union soldiers recently released from the Confed-
7 erate prisoner-of-war camps in Cahaba, Alabama,
8 and Andersonville, Georgia. These men largely
9 hailed from Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, Michigan,
10 Kentucky, and West Virginia.

11 (3) The Sultana disaster was overshadowed by
12 other major events surrounding the end of the
13 American Civil War, including the assassination of
14 President Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865, and
15 subsequently, the killing of President Lincoln's as-
16 sassin, John Wilkes Booth, on April 26, 1865, just
17 1 day before the Sultana disaster.

18 (4) The Sultana Historical Preservation Society
19 now operates the Sultana Disaster Museum in Mar-
20 ion, Arkansas, with artifacts, stories, and exhibits
21 that tell this story. Plans and fundraising are pro-
22 gressing for a much larger facility that can better
23 acquire and preserve the Sultana history.

1 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

2 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In recognition and remem-
3 brance of the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion
4 of 1865, which is the greatest maritime disaster in United
5 States history, the Secretary of the Treasury (hereinafter
6 in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall mint and
7 issue the following coins:

8 (1) \$5 GOLD COINS.—Not more than 100,000
9 \$5 coins, which shall—

10 (A) weigh 8.359 grams;

11 (B) have a diameter of 0.850 inches; and

12 (C) contain not less than 90 percent gold.

13 (2) \$1 SILVER COINS.—Not more than 500,000
14 \$1 coins, which shall—

15 (A) weigh 26.73 grams;

16 (B) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

17 (C) contain not less than 90 percent silver.

18 (3) HALF-DOLLAR CLAD COINS.—Not more
19 than 750,000 half-dollar coins which shall—

20 (A) weigh 11.34 grams;

21 (B) have a diameter of 1.205 inches; and

22 (C) be minted to the specifications for half-
23 dollar coins contained in section 5112(b) of title

24 31, United States Code.

1 (b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this
2 Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of
3 title 31, United States Code.

4 (c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
5 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins
6 minted under this Act shall be considered to be numis-
7 matic items.

8 **SEC. 4. DESIGNS OF COIN.**

9 (a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—The designs of the
10 coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the
11 historical significance of the Sultana disaster and the sac-
12 rifice of the many people of the United States who died
13 and survived on April 27, 1865.

14 (b) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin
15 minted under this Act, there shall be—

- 16 (1) a designation of the value of the coin;
17 (2) an inscription of the year “2023”; and
18 (3) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”, “In
19 God We Trust”, “United States of America”, and
20 “E Pluribus Unum”.

21 (c) SELECTION.—The designs for the coins minted
22 under this Act shall be—

- 23 (1) selected by the Secretary after consultation
24 with the Commission of Fine Arts; and

1 (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory
2 Committee.

3 **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.**

4 (a) **QUALITY OF COINS.**—Coins minted under this
5 Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

6 (b) **PERIOD OF ISSUANCE.**—The Secretary may issue
7 coins minted under this Act only during the 1-year period
8 beginning on January 1, 2023.

9 **SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.**

10 (a) **SALE PRICE.**—The coins issued under this Act
11 shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum
12 of—

13 (1) the face value of the coins;

14 (2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with
15 respect to such coins; and

16 (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins
17 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,
18 overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

19 (b) **PREPAID ORDERS.**—

20 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall accept
21 prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act
22 before the issuance of such coins.

23 (2) **DISCOUNT.**—Sale prices with respect to pre-
24 paid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a rea-
25 sonable discount.

1 (c) **MARKETING AND EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN.**—
2 The Secretary shall develop and execute a marketing, pro-
3 motion, and educational program to promote the collecting
4 of the coins authorized under this Act.

5 **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

6 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—All sales of coins issued under this
7 Act shall include a surcharge of—

- 8 (1) \$35 per coin for the \$5 coin;
- 9 (2) \$10 per coin for the \$1 coin; and
- 10 (3) \$5 per coin for the half-dollar coin.

11 (b) **DISTRIBUTION.**—Subject to section 5134(f) of
12 title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by
13 the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act
14 shall be promptly paid by the Secretary to the Sultana
15 Historical Preservation Society for the purpose of estab-
16 lishing, operating, and maintaining a museum to tell the
17 story of the Sultana, including—

- 18 (1) constructing the museum facility;
- 19 (2) creating, maintaining, and updating as nec-
20 essary museum exhibits;
- 21 (3) acquiring and preserving artifacts, memora-
22 bilia, and historic sites related to the Sultana dis-
23 aster; and
- 24 (4) maintaining an operational reserve fund for
25 the purposes described in this subsection.

1 (c) AUDITS.—The Sultana Historical Preservation
2 Society shall be subject to the audit requirements of sec-
3 tion 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, with regard
4 to the amounts received under subsection (b).

5 (d) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a),
6 no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance
7 under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as
8 of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin
9 would result in the number of commemorative coin pro-
10 grams issued during such year to exceed the annual 2
11 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under
12 section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in
13 effect on the date of enactment of this Act). The Secretary
14 may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

15 **SEC. 8. FINANCIAL ASSURANCES.**

16 The Secretary shall take such actions as may be nec-
17 essary to ensure that—

18 (1) minting and issuing coins under this Act
19 will not result in any net cost to the United States
20 Government; and

21 (2) no funds, including applicable surcharges,
22 are disbursed to the recipient designated in section
23 7 until the total cost of designing and issuing all of
24 the coins authorized by this Act (including labor,
25 materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses,

1 marketing, and shipping) is recovered by the United
2 States Treasury, consistent with sections 5112(m)
3 and 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code.

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