

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 780

To award a congressional gold medal to Chief Phillip Martin of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 3, 2003

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

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## A BILL

To award a congressional gold medal to Chief Phillip Martin of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

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 “Chief Martin Congres-  
5       sional Gold Medal Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds as follows:

8               (1) For more than 45 years, Chief Phillip Mar-  
9       tin has provided extraordinary leadership to the Mis-  
10       sissippi Band of Choctaw Indians, a federally recog-

1 nized Indian tribe located in the State of Mississippi,  
2 as the tribe has undertaken a long and courageous  
3 journey to preserve social and cultural identity while  
4 developing relative prosperity.

5 (2) The vision, guidance, and determination of  
6 Chief Martin has led to the emergence of a virtual  
7 economic miracle, the creation and development of a  
8 new government, and the revitalization of an ancient  
9 society, a claim few governmental leaders of our  
10 time are able to make.

11 (3) Chief Martin has led efforts designed to cre-  
12 ate a vibrant tribal economy that would first provide  
13 jobs, then dignity, and over time a higher quality of  
14 life for the Choctaw people as well as neighboring  
15 communities.

16 (4) Once described as “the worst poverty pocket  
17 in the poorest State of the Union”, the Choctaws  
18 under Chief Martin’s leadership have evolved from  
19 subsistence sharecroppers to become proprietors of a  
20 multi-enterprise, industrial and commercial power-  
21 house.

22 (5) With the creation of nearly 9,000 perma-  
23 nent, full-time jobs, the Choctaw tribe is now 1 of  
24 the 5 largest employers in the State of Mississippi.

1           (6) Chief Martin has been guided by a belief  
2 that self-reliance breeds opportunity.

3           (7) Early developments on the Choctaw reserva-  
4 tion, while modest in retrospect, were nonetheless  
5 ambitious and challenging in their beginnings.

6           (8) Faced with active opposition from Federal  
7 authorities and expectations of failure from many  
8 others, Chief Martin tenaciously led the Choctaw  
9 tribe to establish a tribally-owned construction com-  
10 pany, then a small industrial park which produced  
11 the first large scale reservation-based manufacturing  
12 jobs in the Nation.

13           (9) In addition to more usual government-oper-  
14 ated enterprises, such as a transit authority, a util-  
15 ity commission, and a public works department, the  
16 Chief also created many fruitful partnerships with  
17 the private sector.

18           (10) These dynamic developments have now  
19 given the tribe a solid economic foundation.

20           (11) Recognizing that the most valuable asset  
21 of any community is its people, Chief Martin led the  
22 Choctaws to take over direct operation of its own  
23 education system from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

1           (12) The tribe today operates the largest uni-  
2           fied tribal school system in the Nation, with 6 ele-  
3           mentary schools, a middle school, and a high school.

4           (13) Chief Martin has continued toward the  
5           goal of producing a new generation of well-educated  
6           and well-trained tribal members through establish-  
7           ment of the Choctaw Indian Scholarships Program,  
8           giving all Mississippi Choctaw students the oppor-  
9           tunity to attend colleges and universities of their  
10          choice.

11          (14) With the passage of the Indian Self-Deter-  
12          mination and Education Assistance Act in 1975, the  
13          Congress established the concepts of self-determina-  
14          tion, self-reliance, and tribal initiative as the basis  
15          for a new covenant between the Federal Government  
16          and the American Indian peoples.

17          (15) However, it has only been through the ex-  
18          traordinary commitment and ceaseless efforts of  
19          tribal leaders, such as Chief Martin, that these con-  
20          cepts were given life and put into practice.

21          (16) “Choctaw Self Determination” became  
22          Chief Martin’s clarion call (and it remains the  
23          tribe’s unofficial slogan) to motivate an impoverished  
24          reservation that institutionalized poverty and hope-  
25          lessness to transform itself into the vibrant entity

1 that today serves as a beacon of success for other  
2 tribal and non-tribal communities.

3 (17) Deeply devoted to tribal sovereignty, trust  
4 land, and economic development issues, Chief Martin  
5 has improved the lives of thousands in Mississippi,  
6 and is perhaps the most recognized American Indian  
7 leader: he has been called “one of Indian Country’s  
8 greatest leaders”.

9 (18) The outstanding example of Chief Phillip  
10 Martin deserves to be recognized and honored by the  
11 United States Congress.

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

13 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
14 the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tem-  
15 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
16 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold  
17 medal of appropriate design, to Chief Phillip Martin in  
18 recognition of his leadership of the Mississippi Band of  
19 Choctaw Indians for over 45 years, and for his invaluable  
20 contributions nationally to the American Indian commu-  
21 nity and particularly to the native and non-native commu-  
22 nities of Mississippi.

23 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the  
24 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
25 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-

1 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,  
2 devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Sec-  
3 retary.

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

5 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
6 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3,  
7 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at  
8 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,  
9 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,  
10 and the cost of the gold medal.

11 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-  
13 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter  
14 51 of title 31, United States Code.

15 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
16 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
17 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

18 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**

19 **SALE.**

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

1           (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
2 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section  
3 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public  
4 Enterprise Fund.

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