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113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4045

To award a Congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2014

Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. BARBER, Ms. BASS, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCIA, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. HAHN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HANNA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JONES, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. LANCE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCALLISTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHOCK, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VELA, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATERS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for

consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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A BILL

To award a Congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''First Rhode Island Regiment Congressional Gold Medal Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) During the winter of Valley Forge, from 1777–1778, the Continental Army had difficulty recruiting the necessary quotas of men set by the Congress.

(2) At the same time, the State of Rhode Island was ordered to supply two battalions while faced with the occupation of the City of Newport by the British.

(3) In January 1778, at the urging of Brigadier General James Varnum, General George Washington wrote to Governor Nicholas Cooke of the State of

Rhode Island requesting assistance recruiting men for the Continental Line.

(4) On February 14, 1778, the Rhode Island General Assembly voted to allow the enlistment of ''every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man slave''.

(5) In addition, the Rhode Island General Assembly provided that any enlisted slave ''upon his passing muster before Colonel Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress, and be absolutely free as though he had never been incumbered and be incumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery.''.

(6) As a result, between February 1778 and June 1778, Colonel Christopher Greene, Lt. Colonel Jeremiah Olney and Major Samuel Ward recruited almost 200 men of African and Native American descent who formed the core of the First Rhode Island Regiment.

(7) The First Rhode Island Regiment became among the first units in American History in which men of every race and ethnicity were recruited to serve.

(8) On August 28, 1778, at the Battle of Rhode Island, following an attempted siege of Brit-

ish-occupied Newport along with the newly allied French fleet, the First Rhode Island Regiment acted heroically in holding back Hessian forces and causing them to retreat.

(9) During the Battle of Rhode Island, the First Rhode Island Regiment's losses included three killed, nine wounded and eleven missing soldiers.

(10) For an additional 5 years, the First Rhode Island Regiment fought bravely to win American independence including at Fort Oswego, Saratoga, and Yorktown.

(11) On June 13, 1783, at Saratoga, the First Rhode Island Regiment was demobilized.

(12) Their commander, Colonel Jeremiah Olney, praised the Regiment for ''faithfully preserving in the best of causes, in every stage of service, with unexampled fortitude and patience through all the danger and toils of a long and severe war''.

(13) Afterwards, some veterans of the First Rhode Island Regiment had to consistently resist efforts at re-enslavement and fought for back wages from the Rhode Island General Assembly.

(14) According to the Rhode Island State Archives, the First Rhode Island Regiment included at least the following soldiers: Babcock, Priamus (Pri-

mus); Bent, Prince; Bours, Cato; Brown, Priamus (Primus); Burk, Africa; Burroughs, John; Carpenter, Cudgo; Champlin, Dick; Champlin, Jack; Champlin, July; Champlin, Newport; Champlin, Sharper; Champlin, York; Clark, James; Coddington, Jack; Fones, Jack; Gardner, Cuff; Gardner, Hercules; Gardner, Minkl; Gardner, Preamus (Primus); Gardner, Rutter; Gray, Ebenezer; Green, Cuff; Greene, Cato; Greene, Jack; Greene, Pero; Greene, William; Hammond, Prince; Harriss, Cesar; Hazard, Backus; Hazard, Jabin; Hazard, Jacob; Hazard, Peter; Hazard, Peter; Lefavour, Thom; Mason, Warsen; Mawney, Cyrus; Minturn, Jack; Mowrey, Pero; Nichols, Thomas; Perry, Ganset; Phillips, Philow; Pierce, Titus; Potter, David; Randall, Prince; Rhodes, Bristol; Rhodes, Priamus; Rhodes, Richard; Rhodes, Samuel; Richmond, Ebenezer; Robinson, Mingo; Rodman, Isaac; Rodman, Mingo; Rodman, Prince; Rose, Cesar; Saltonstall, Brittain; Saunders, Sampson; Sheldon, Cesar; Slave; Slave; Smith, Juba; Sweeling, Query; Talbot, Sigby; Tanner, Quam; Tillinghast, Cuff; Updike, Cesar; Updike, Moses; Vaughan, Prince; Vernon, Cato; Watson, Fortune; Wells, Cesar; Wickes, Nat; and Willbour, Boston.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design to the First Rhode Island Regiment, collectively in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the First Rhode Island Regiment of the Revolutionary War under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other

appropriate locations associated with the First Rhode Island Regiment of the Revolutionary War.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

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

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

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

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

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