

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6944

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, in recognition of her contribution to the Nation and her courageous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal rights for women and the LGBTQ community in athletics, education, and our society.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 19, 2020

Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. SHALALA, Mr. CORREA, Mr. LEVIN of California, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COX of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. VARGAS, and Ms. JAYAPAL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, in recognition of her contribution to the Nation and her courageous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal rights for women and the LGBTQ community in athletics, education, and our society.

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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Billie Jean King, born Billie Jean Moffit,  
2           on November 22, 1943, in Long Beach, California,  
3           was the first child of Betty (née Jerman) and Bill  
4           Moffitt.

5           (2) Billie Jean demonstrated athletic prowess  
6           from a young age. She was introduced to tennis at  
7           the age of 11, and soon after, Billie Jean purchased  
8           her first tennis racket using money she earned work-  
9           ing various jobs in her neighborhood.

10          (3) After becoming involved with tennis, Billie  
11          Jean observed inequities within the sport and real-  
12          ized she could use tennis as a platform—if she be-  
13          came number one. From then on, Billie Jean was  
14          determined to become a top athlete in her sport.

15          (4) Billie Jean broke numerous barriers to be-  
16          come a number one professional tennis player. She  
17          dominated women’s tennis with 39 Grand Slam sin-  
18          gles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles, including a  
19          record 20 championships at Wimbledon. She also  
20          was a member of three World TeamTennis cham-  
21          pionship teams.

22          (5) After growing in prominence, Billie Jean  
23          used her platform as a celebrity to fight for equal  
24          rights and opportunities for equality for all genders  
25          in sports—and society—in the United States.

1           (6) Billie Jean played an instrumental role in  
2 the passage of Title IX, a law that mandates equal  
3 funding for women’s and men’s sports programs in  
4 schools and colleges. This legislation has unlocked a  
5 world of opportunities for girls and women in edu-  
6 cation and sports.

7           (7) During Billie Jean’s career, the pay dif-  
8 ference between prize money for men and women in  
9 tennis continued to expand. By the early 1970s, the  
10 pay gap in prize money reached ratios of as much  
11 as 12 to one. Fewer and fewer tournaments were  
12 hosting women’s events. Realizing that she would  
13 not have support from mainstream tennis organiza-  
14 tions, Billie Jean harnessed the energy of the wom-  
15 en’s rights movement to create a women’s tennis  
16 tour that would elevate women’s tennis and establish  
17 pay equity within the sport. Along with eight other  
18 women tennis players, Billie Jean risked it all and  
19 formed an independent women’s professional tennis  
20 circuit, the Virginia Slims Tournament, and a play-  
21 er’s union that would help achieve greater equality  
22 in prize money and recognition for women in sports.

23           (8) In 1971, Billie Jean became the first  
24 woman in sports history to make \$100,000 in earn-  
25 ings in a single year.

1           (9) In 1972, Billie Jean was also the first ten-  
2           nis player to be named Sports Illustrated’s Sports-  
3           person of the Year and the first woman to receive  
4           the honor.

5           (10) Billie Jean founded the Women’s Tennis  
6           Association, a successor to the Virginia Slims Series,  
7           and today’s principal governing body for women’s  
8           professional tennis.

9           (11) Billie Jean helped found womenSports  
10          magazine and founded the Women’s Sports Founda-  
11          tion. Both have been at the forefront of advancing  
12          women’s voice in sports.

13          (12) In 1973, Billie Jean played a tennis match  
14          against Bobby Riggs, a top-ranked player through  
15          the 1940s who sought to undermine the credibility  
16          and prominence of women in sports. Billie Jean de-  
17          feated Riggs in what became a firm declaration of  
18          women’s role in sports and society.

19          (13) Billie Jean was one of the first women  
20          athletes to identify as lesbian, and has courageously  
21          challenged negative stereotypes and championed the  
22          visibility and inclusion of the LGBTQ community.

23          (14) Billie Jean King was named one of the  
24          “100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Cen-  
25          tury” by LIFE magazine.

1           (15) Billie Jean King is the recipient of the  
2           1999 Arthur Ashe Award for Courage.

3           (16) Billie Jean’s excellence has earned her  
4           place in the International Women’s Sports Hall of  
5           Fame, the International Tennis Hall of Fame, and  
6           the National Women’s Hall of Fame.

7           (17) In 2006, the United States Tennis Asso-  
8           ciation recognized Billie Jean’s immeasurable impact  
9           on the sport of tennis by renaming the site of the  
10          US Open in her honor as the USTA Billie Jean  
11          King National Tennis Center, which is located in  
12          Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens, New  
13          York. This was the first time a major sporting com-  
14          plex was named after a woman.

15          (18) Billie Jean King has received honorary de-  
16          grees from colleges and universities across the Na-  
17          tion, including the University of Pennsylvania, Dart-  
18          mouth College, the University of Massachusetts Am-  
19          herst, and Northwestern University, amongst others.

20          (19) Billie Jean’s commitment and tireless ad-  
21          vocacy to expand women’s tennis, created ground-  
22          breaking opportunities, financial and otherwise, for  
23          women not only in tennis but across women’s sports.  
24          She has paved the way for others, including today’s

1 fabled tennis champion duo, sisters Venus and  
2 Serena Williams.

3 (20) Billie Jean believes in changing hearts and  
4 minds, and through her talent, tenacity, and advo-  
5 cacy she changed how women are perceived world-  
6 wide.

7 (21) In 2009, Billie Jean was awarded the  
8 Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest  
9 civilian honor, by President Barack Obama for her  
10 impactful work advocating for the rights of women  
11 and the LGBTQ community. She was the first fe-  
12 male athlete to receive this honor.

13 (22) In 2014, Billie Jean King founded an in-  
14 clusive leadership non-profit organization to promote  
15 and transform equality in the workplace worldwide.  
16 The Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative aims to  
17 empower companies and individuals to create inclu-  
18 sive work environments that celebrate and promote  
19 diversity to increase representation, maximize our ef-  
20 ficiency, and tap into the unlimited potential of tal-  
21 ent in our world.

22 (23) Billie Jean King's extraordinary courage,  
23 leadership, and activism helped propel the women's  
24 movement forward, and open doors for countless  
25 Americans regardless of gender, race, class or sexual

1 orientation. On and off the court, Billie Jean has  
2 served as an inspiration to millions of people the  
3 world over. Few women and men have had a greater  
4 impact on their sport and on our society than Billie  
5 Jean King.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

7 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
8 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-  
9 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
10 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold  
11 medal of appropriate design, to Billie Jean King, in rec-  
12 ognition of her contribution to the Nation and her coura-  
13 geous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal  
14 rights for women and the LGBTQ community in athletics,  
15 education, and our society.

16 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the  
17 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
18 of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the  
19 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-  
20 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the  
21 Secretary.

22 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

23 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-  
24 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
25 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 at

1 a price sufficient to cover the cost of the bronze medals  
2 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and  
3 overhead expenses) and the cost of the gold medal.

4 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

5       The medals struck under this Act are national medals  
6 for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

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