

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1174

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Norman Christopher Francis, in recognition of his contributions to the United States through his lifelong dedication to education, justice, and public service.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 24, 2023

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. NEGUSE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. IVEY, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. BROWN, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. WATERS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. SOTO, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia) 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 Dr. Norman Christopher Francis, in recognition of his contributions to the United States through his lifelong dedication to education, justice, and public service.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Dr. Norman C.  
3 Francis Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Dr. Norman Christopher Francis was born  
7 in Lafayette, LA, on March 20, 1931, to Joseph A.  
8 Francis and Mabel F. Francis. His parents were a  
9 barber and a homemaker, and he had a Catholic  
10 education at St. Paul Catholic elementary and sec-  
11 ondary schools in Lafayette.

12 (2) After graduation, Francis attended Xavier  
13 University of Louisiana in New Orleans, where he  
14 graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree.

15 (3) An honor student all four years at Xavier  
16 University of Louisiana, young Norman Francis con-  
17 ducted his work scholarship repairing damaged  
18 books in the university library. In his senior year, he  
19 was elected student body president.

20 (4) From 1952–1955, Francis attended Loyola  
21 University Law School in New Orleans, where he  
22 earned his Juris Doctorate. He made history as the  
23 first Black graduate of Loyola University Law  
24 School in 1955.

25 (5) Upon graduation he married the late Mrs.  
26 Blanche Macdonald, but then was drafted into the

1 United States Army's Third Armored Division,  
2 where he earned the rank of corporal specialist four.  
3 After a two-year tour of duty, Francis left the Army  
4 in 1957 and began his civilian career.

5 (6) Upon his return from the military, he joined  
6 the U.S. Attorney's Office and worked to help inte-  
7 grate Federal agencies.

8 (7) Dr. Francis used his law degree to rep-  
9 resent civil rights activists as a young lawyer. One  
10 of his clients was Xavier student body president, Ru-  
11 dolph Lombard, who had been arrested for attempt-  
12 ing to integrate the lunch counter at McCrory's on  
13 Canal Street in New Orleans.

14 (8) As Dean of Men at Xavier University of  
15 Louisiana in 1961, he showed his moral courage and  
16 vision by housing the Freedom Riders in the historic  
17 St. Michael's dormitory when the rest of New Orle-  
18 ans establishments had closed their doors to them or  
19 openly threatened their safety.

20 (9) In 1963, he became Director of Student  
21 Personnel Services and one year later (1964) he was  
22 promoted to Assistant to the President. In 1967, he  
23 became Executive Vice President.

1           (10) In 1967, Dr. Francis joined the brother-  
2 hood of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated,  
3 Sigma Lambda chapter.

4           (11) On the day of the assassination of Dr.  
5 Martin Luther King, April 4, 1968, at the age of 37,  
6 Dr. Francis accepted the position as President of  
7 Xavier University of Louisiana, the Nation’s only  
8 historically Black and Catholic university, and his  
9 alma mater. He broke barriers on that day by be-  
10 coming the first African-American lay person to  
11 serve in that position.

12           (12) His tenure as President lasted from 1968–  
13 2015, and he is one of the longest-sitting university  
14 presidents in the Nation’s history. Over that 49-year  
15 term, Dr. Francis steered the university to grow  
16 both in size and dimension.

17           (13) Dr. Francis was President of Xavier Uni-  
18 versity of Louisiana during the height of the Civil  
19 Rights Movement, and while at the helm of the  
20 school, he more than tripled its enrollment, ex-  
21 panded course offerings, and transformed the cam-  
22 pus grounds into an “Emerald City” of colorful  
23 green roofs. During his tenure, Xavier awarded more  
24 doctorate pharmacy degrees to Black Americans and

1 sent more Black graduates to medical school than  
2 any other U.S. university.

3 (14) Dr. Francis cofounded the Liberty Bank  
4 of New Orleans, one of the largest Black-owned  
5 banks in the country. Dr. Francis has served as its  
6 Chairman since the Bank’s inception in 1972 work-  
7 ing to improve access to financial institutions for  
8 Black Americans.

9 (15) Francis has served in an advisory role to  
10 eight U.S. presidential administrations—not only on  
11 education issues, but civil rights as well—in addition  
12 to serving on 54 boards and commissions. In 1983,  
13 Francis helped compile and release the report “A  
14 Nation at Risk” during his service on the National  
15 Commission on Excellence in Education. The report  
16 was a landmark piece that summarized racism and  
17 classism with the school system and called for com-  
18 prehensive education reform.

19 (16) He co-chaired the Louisiana Recovery Au-  
20 thority after Hurricane Katrina, playing a vital role  
21 in helping the people of New Orleans and the Gulf  
22 Coast rebuild their lives in the aftermath of Hurri-  
23 cane Katrina.

24 (17) In 2006, then-President George W. Bush  
25 presented him with the Nation’s highest civil award,

1 the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of  
2 his, “deep intellect, compassion and character.”.

3 (18) In 2009, he was named one of “America’s  
4 Best Leaders” by U.S. News Media Group and the  
5 Center for Public Leadership (CPL) at Harvard  
6 Kennedy’s School of Government.

7 (19) He has received 40 honorary degrees from  
8 other universities, and at least 20 major awards in  
9 recognition of his leadership in higher education as  
10 well as his unselfish service to New Orleans and to  
11 the Nation.

12 (20) Francis’ civic endeavors include service as  
13 Chair of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, past  
14 Chair of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Founda-  
15 tion, past Chair of the Southern Education Founda-  
16 tion, Chairman of the Board of Liberty Bank and  
17 Trust and a member of the Times-Picayune Advi-  
18 sory Board. Previously he has been Chairman of the  
19 New Orleans Aviation Board, the Metropolitan Area  
20 Committee Education Fund and the Board of Direc-  
21 tors of PBS-affiliate WLAE-TV.

22 (21) Dr. Francis has been involved at the na-  
23 tional level as past Chairman of the Boards of the  
24 Educational Testing Service, the Carnegie Founda-  
25 tion for the Advancement of Teaching, the College

1 Board, the Southern Education Foundation and the  
2 American Association of Higher Education. He was  
3 also member president of the UNCF, a member of  
4 the Board of Trustees of Catholic University, and  
5 Chairman of SACS, the southern regional accred-  
6 iting agency for more than 11,000 institutions in  
7 eleven States.

8 (22) A man of enduring determination, vision,  
9 faith, and strength, Dr. Norman C. Francis has for-  
10 ever changed the lives and landscape of the commu-  
11 nities of New Orleans, Louisiana, and all of Amer-  
12 ica. We are forever grateful for his service and are  
13 proud to present him with the distinguished recogni-  
14 tion of a Congressional Gold Medal.

15 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

16 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
17 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-  
18 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
19 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold  
20 medal of appropriate design to Dr. Norman C. Francis,  
21 in recognition of his contributions to the United States.

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

1 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-  
2 retary. The design shall bear an image of, and inscription  
3 of the name of, Dr. Norman C. Francis.

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, at  
7 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,  
8 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

9 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

13 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
14 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
15 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
16 items.

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

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

24 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
25 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section



- 1 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
- 2 Enterprise Fund.

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