

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1831

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 28, 2023

Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. CORREA, Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mrs. KIM of California, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. STEEL, Ms. MENG, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in 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:

5 (1) Billie Jean King, born Billie Jean Moffitt,
6 on November 22, 1943, in Long Beach, California,

1 demonstrated athletic prowess from a young age.
2 She was introduced to tennis at the age of 11, and
3 soon after, Billie Jean purchased her first tennis
4 racket using money she earned working various jobs
5 in her neighborhood.

6 (2) Billie Jean broke numerous barriers to be-
7 come a number one professional tennis player. She
8 dominated women’s tennis with 39 Grand Slam sin-
9 gles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles, including a
10 record 20 championships at Wimbledon. She also
11 was a member of 3 World TeamTennis champion-
12 ship teams.

13 (3) After growing in prominence, Billie Jean
14 used her platform as a celebrity to fight for equal
15 rights and opportunities for equality for all in
16 sports—and society—in the United States.

17 (4) Billie Jean played an instrumental role in
18 the passage of Title IX, a law that mandates equal
19 funding for women’s and men’s sports programs in
20 schools and colleges. This legislation has unlocked a
21 world of opportunities for girls and women in edu-
22 cation and sports.

23 (5) During Billie Jean’s career, the pay dif-
24 ference between prize money for men and women in
25 tennis continued to expand. By the early 1970s, the

1 pay gap in prize money reached ratios of as much
2 as 12 to 1. Fewer and fewer tournaments were
3 hosting women's events. Billie Jean harnessed the
4 energy of the women's rights movement to create a
5 women's tennis tour that would elevate women's ten-
6 nis and establish pay equity within the sport. Along
7 with 8 other women tennis players, she formed an
8 independent women's professional tennis circuit, the
9 Virginia Slims Series.

10 (6) In 1973, Billie Jean founded the Women's
11 Tennis Association, today's principal governing body
12 for women's professional tennis.

13 (7) Billie Jean helped found womenSports mag-
14 azine and founded the Women's Sports Foundation.
15 Both have been at the forefront of advancing wom-
16 en's voice in sports.

17 (8) Billie Jean successfully lobbied for equal
18 prize money for men and women at the 1973 U.S.
19 Open Tennis Championships. It would take another
20 34 years for the other 3 major tournaments to all
21 offer equal prize money.

22 (9) In 1973, Billie Jean played a tennis match
23 against Bobby Riggs, a former World Number 1
24 player who sought to undermine the credibility and
25 prominence of women in sports. Billie Jean defeated

1 Riggs in what became a firm declaration of women’s
2 role in sports and society.

3 (10) Billie Jean King was the first tennis play-
4 er and woman to be named Sports Illustrated’s
5 Sportsperson of the Year, one of the “100 Most Im-
6 portant Americans of the 20th Century” by LIFE
7 magazine, was the recipient of the 1999 Arthur
8 Ashe Award for Courage, and has been admitted to
9 the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame, the
10 International Tennis Hall of Fame, and the National
11 Women’s Hall of Fame.

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

20 (12) In 2009, Billie Jean was awarded the
21 Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation’s highest
22 civilian honor, by President Barack Obama for her
23 impactful work advocating for the rights of women.
24 She was the first female athlete to receive this
25 honor.

1 (13) In 2014, Billie Jean King founded the Bil-
2 lie Jean King Leadership Initiative to empower com-
3 panies and individuals to create inclusive work envi-
4 ronments that celebrate and promote diversity and
5 equality in the workplace.

6 (14) In 2020, Fed Cup, the world cup of wom-
7 en’s tennis, was renamed the Billie Jean King Cup,
8 making it the first global team competition to be
9 named after a woman.

10 (15) Billie Jean King’s extraordinary courage,
11 leadership, and activism helped propel the women’s
12 movement forward, and open doors for countless
13 Americans. On and off the court, Billie Jean has
14 served as an inspiration to millions of people the
15 world over. Few women and men have had a greater
16 impact on their sport and on our society than Billie
17 Jean King.

18 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

19 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
20 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
21 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
22 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold
23 medal of appropriate design, to Billie Jean King, in rec-
24 ognition of her contribution to the Nation and her coura-

1 geous and groundbreaking leadership advancing equal
2 rights for women in athletics, education, and our society.

3 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the
4 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
5 of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the
6 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
7 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the
8 Secretary.

9 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

10 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
11 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
12 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 at
13 a price sufficient to cover the cost of the bronze medals
14 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and
15 overhead expenses).

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

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

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