

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8542

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner, in recognition of his service to the United States during World War II and his contributions to the medical field, particularly gastroenterology.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2024

Mr. MAST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner, in recognition of his service to the United States during World War II and his contributions to the medical field, particularly gastroenterology.

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 “Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner was born to Ukrain-
2 ian Jewish immigrants Harris and Ida Kirsner on
3 September 21, 1909, in Boston, Massachusetts.

4 (2) Dr. Kirsner earned his medical degree from
5 Tufts University, graduating near the top of his
6 class, in 1933.

7 (3) In 1935, Dr. Kirsner joined the staff of the
8 first academic gastroenterology unit in the United
9 States at the University of Chicago.

10 (4) Dr. Kirsner earned his PhD in gastro-
11 enterology from the University of Chicago in 1942.

12 (5) Dr. Kirsner joined the United States Army
13 Medical Corps as a First Lieutenant in September
14 1943 and served three years with the 15th, 203rd,
15 and 229th General Hospitals.

16 (6) Dr. Kirsner was one of the few doctors con-
17 sulted on the refeeding of Holocaust survivors.

18 (7) Dr. Kirsner continuously fought to increase
19 and diversify research funding for gastroenterology.

20 (8) In 1962, Dr. Kirsner, along with a group
21 of his patients, the Section of Gastroenterology, and
22 the University of Chicago established the Gastro-In-
23 testinal Research Foundation.

24 (9) Dr. Kirsner received every major award and
25 honor for gastroenterology throughout his career, ex-

1 cept the one award he was ineligible to win, the
2 American Digestive Health Foundation's top prize
3 for excellence in clinical research, the Joseph B.
4 Kirsner Award.

5 (10) Dr. Kirsner was a pioneer in gastro-
6 enterology who dedicated his life to medicine, teach-
7 ing, and patient care.

8 (11) Dr. Kirsner conducted invaluable research
9 on peptic ulcers, inflammatory bowel disease, colitis,
10 and Crohn's disease, and made numerous break-
11 throughs in the field on patient management and
12 cancer risk.

13 (12) Dr. Kirsner trained over 200 fellows, in-
14 cluding more than 41 full professors, and 14 depart-
15 ment chairs in gastroenterology.

16 (13) Throughout his career Dr. Kirsner au-
17 thored over 750 scientific papers and 18 textbooks,
18 which are the leading teaching materials on gastro-
19 enterology.

20 (14) Dr. Kirsner was instrumental in founding
21 the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endos-
22 copy, the American Association for the Study of
23 Liver Diseases, the Gastroenterology Research
24 Group (American Gastroenterological Association),

1 and the National Foundation for Research in Ulcer-
2 ative Colitis, among others.

3 (15) Dr. Kirsner continued to treat patients
4 until he retired in 2010, at the age of 100.

5 (16) Dr. Kirsner passed away from kidney fail-
6 ure on July 7, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois.

7 (17) The Congress has awarded similar medals
8 to other doctors for their outstanding contributions
9 to the medical field, including Major Walter Reed
10 and his associates in 1928, Dr. Thomas Anthony
11 Dooley III in 1961, Dr. Jonas E. Salk in 1977, and
12 Dr. Michael Ellis DeBakey in 2007.

13 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

14 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
15 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
16 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
17 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
18 of appropriate design to Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner, in rec-
19 ognition of his service to the United States during World
20 War II and his contributions to the medical field, particu-
21 larly gastroenterology.

22 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
23 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
24 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
25 retary”) shall strike the 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. Joseph B. Kirsner.

4 (c) JOSEPH B. KIRSNER LIBRARY.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—After the award of the gold
6 medal referred to in subsection (a), the gold medal
7 shall be given to the University of Chicago, where it
8 shall be displayed as appropriate in the Joseph B.
9 Kirsner library and made available for research.

10 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
11 Congress that the University of Chicago should
12 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
13 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
14 locations and events associated with Dr. Joseph B.
15 Kirsner.

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

17 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
18 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
19 sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, mate-
20 rials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

21 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

1 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
2 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
3 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
4 items.

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

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

12 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
13 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
14 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
15 Enterprise Fund.

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