

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5521

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Peace Corps volunteers, in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments, continuous dedication to world peace and friendship, and their honorable service to the Nation for 65 years.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2025

Ms. MCCOLLUM (for herself, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. LANDSMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Peace Corps volunteers, in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments, continuous dedication to world peace and friendship, and their honorable service to the Nation for 65 years.

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 “Peace Corps Volun-
5 teers Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATED TO REC-**
2 **OGNITION OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

4 (1) In 2026, our Nation celebrates the 65th an-
5 niversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps,
6 one of the most beneficial and celebrated inter-
7 national assistance programs in the world.

8 (2) Nearly 250,000 Peace Corps Volunteers (in
9 this section referred to as the “Volunteers”) have
10 served our Nation with distinction. Volunteers have
11 been integral in promoting world peace and friend-
12 ship in more than 140 countries around the globe.
13 Their expertise in a wide variety of sectors, includ-
14 ing agriculture, community economic development,
15 education, environment, health, and youth in devel-
16 opment, has contributed significantly to the needs of
17 foreign countries on many levels.

18 (3) The Congressional Gold Medal is intended
19 to honor those Volunteers who served between Au-
20 gust 28, 1961, when the first Volunteers departed
21 from the United States for Ghana, and December
22 31, 2026.

23 (4) President John F. Kennedy expressed his
24 call to service for Americans during his inaugural
25 address on January 20, 1961, when he said, “And
26 so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country

1 can do for you—ask what you can do for your coun-
2 try. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what
3 America will do for you, but what together we can
4 do for the freedom of man.”.

5 (5) On March 1, 1961, President Kennedy
6 signed Executive Order 10924 (26 Fed. Reg. 1789)
7 establishing the Peace Corps. At a State Depart-
8 ment press conference after signing the Executive
9 order, President Kennedy said, “We will send those
10 abroad who are committed to the concept which mo-
11 tivates the Peace Corps. It will not be easy. None of
12 the men and women will be paid a salary. They will
13 live at the same level as the citizens of the country
14 which they are sent to, doing the same work, eating
15 the same food, speaking the same language. We are
16 going to put particular emphasis on those men and
17 women who have skills in teaching, agriculture, and
18 in health. I am hopeful it will be a source of satis-
19 faction to Americans and a contribution to world
20 peace.”.

21 (6) When President Kennedy signed the Peace
22 Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) on September
23 22, 1961, providing the legislative foundation for the
24 Peace Corps, the White House released a statement
25 saying, “With the enactment of this legislation, an

1 avenue is provided by which Americans can serve
2 their country in the cause of world peace and under-
3 standing and simultaneously assist other nations to-
4 ward their legitimate goals of freedom and oppor-
5 tunity.”.

6 (7) Individuals across our Nation were inspired
7 to serve as Volunteers supported by the leadership
8 and vision of Sargent Shriver, who served as the
9 first Director of the Peace Corps from 1961 to
10 1966. The Volunteers shared his vision, which be-
11 came the mission of the Peace Corps: “To promote
12 world peace and friendship through community-
13 based development and intercultural under-
14 standing.”. Volunteers were strongly encouraged to
15 respect local customs, learn the prevailing language,
16 and live in comparable conditions.

17 (8) Volunteers’ service is guided by the 3 goals
18 of the Peace Corps:

19 (A) “To help the countries interested in
20 meeting their need for trained people.”. Volun-
21 teers exchange skills and knowledge with com-
22 munity members in their welcoming host coun-
23 tries to help create sustainable change through
24 work in the sectors described in paragraph (2).

1 (B) “To help promote a better under-
2 standing of Americans on the part of the peo-
3 ples served.”. Through their service, Volunteers
4 share the United States and its values. Their
5 outstanding contributions to the nations of the
6 world help promote cultural understanding.

7 (C) “To help promote a better under-
8 standing of other peoples on the part of Ameri-
9 cans.”. Volunteers immerse themselves in local
10 cultures, and learn about opportunities, re-
11 sources, and people in their host countries.
12 When they return to the United States, they
13 share their experiences with family, friends, and
14 the public, which helps promote cultural under-
15 standing, volunteerism, and public service.

16 (9) During a Rose Garden ceremony at the
17 White House on April 23, 1985, accompanied by
18 Vice President George H.W. Bush and Peace Corps
19 Director Loret Miller Ruppe, President Ronald
20 Reagan wished Volunteers success for their assign-
21 ments in Africa, saying, “Soon you’ll be in Africa,
22 where you’ll be a vital part of the relief aid to help
23 the millions suffering from malnutrition and starva-
24 tion. You’ll be living in some of the most impover-
25 ished countries of the world, working in food produc-

1 tion, soil conservation, fisheries production, forest
2 preservation, and water supply development. By
3 bringing your training and skills to bear on the un-
4 derlying problems of agricultural and economic de-
5 velopment, you can help your host nations make the
6 difficult but vital journey from dependence on short-
7 term aid to self-sufficiency. Vice President Bush re-
8 turned from his trip to the famine-stricken regions
9 of Africa, he gave me a personal account of the
10 heartbreaking conditions in that land. While there,
11 he visited one Peace Corps project, and he told me
12 of the outstanding work of the Peace Corps volun-
13 teers. The crisis in Africa is severe and the problems
14 deeply rooted, but relief efforts are already making
15 a great difference.”.

16 (10) Peace Corps senior leaders, staff, and Vol-
17 unteers have honored President Kennedy’s vision for
18 the Peace Corps and his legacy. During a March 1,
19 1996, speech for the 35th anniversary of the Peace
20 Corps, Sargent Shriver said, “The Peace Corps rep-
21 resents some, if not all, of the best virtues in this
22 society. It stands for everything that America has
23 ever stood for. It stands for everything we believe in
24 and hope to achieve in the world.”.

1 (11) The Peace Corps, since its pioneering cre-
2 ation by President Kennedy and an ensuing 65 years
3 of support by the Federal Government, has proven
4 to be one of the most successful United States for-
5 eign policy programs in the history of our Nation.
6 The importance of the Peace Corps was reinforced
7 in a May 24, 2017, opinion article by General Colin
8 Powell, retired Secretary of State, when he said,
9 “Indeed, we’re strongest when the face of America
10 isn’t only a soldier carrying a gun but a diplomat
11 negotiating peace, a Peace Corps Volunteer bringing
12 clean water to a village, or a relief worker stepping
13 off a cargo plane as floodwaters rise.”.

14 (12) The global accomplishments of Volunteers
15 toward world peace and friendship and their resolute
16 service to the United States are deserving of robust
17 public recognition and respect. As President Ken-
18 nedy said, after signing Executive Order 10924 (26
19 Fed. Reg. 1789) creating the Peace Corps, “The ini-
20 tial reactions to the Peace Corps proposal are con-
21 vincing proof that we have, in this country, an im-
22 mense reservoir of such men and women—anxious to
23 sacrifice their energies and time and toil to the
24 cause of world peace and human progress.”.

1 (13) Some Volunteers made the ultimate sac-
2 rifice while in service. According to the Fallen Peace
3 Corps Volunteers Memorial Project, more than 300
4 Volunteers have died in service, or following close of
5 service as a result of service-related causes, since the
6 Peace Corps began in 1961. Their significant sac-
7 rifices and service to our Nation and their host
8 countries should be honored with reverence.

9 (14) During the COVID-19 pandemic, over
10 7,000 Volunteers were recalled from their work in
11 host countries. Though they were evacuated for
12 health reasons from their assigned projects, they
13 continued to volunteer when they returned to the
14 United States to support the national response to a
15 global health crisis. Former Peace Corps Director,
16 Josephine (Jody) Olsen, who supervised the complex
17 and immediate recall process, wrote, “Odysseys by
18 individual Peace Corps Volunteers forged over six
19 decades made the total evacuation of seven thousand
20 Volunteers due of Covid-19 in 2020 possible. As I
21 sent out the immediate evacuation order on March
22 15, I trusted that in sixty-one countries, the thou-
23 sands of host country families, teachers, clinic direc-
24 tors, local taxi drivers, community security officers,
25 airlines, and medical officials that support Volun-

1 teers would selflessly offer their help. These thou-
2 sands shared painful good-byes and supported the
3 safe movement of all of the volunteers to capital cit-
4 ies, international airports, charter flights to the US
5 over the course of nine days without illness or acci-
6 dent.”. When Volunteers returned to the United
7 States, many shifted their work to support domestic
8 initiatives, including COVID–19 surveillance and
9 health programs in collaboration with the Environ-
10 mental Protection Agency. The EPA connected Vol-
11 unteers who returned to the United States with roles
12 in public health for pandemic response efforts in the
13 United States. Meanwhile, the Peace Corps launched
14 the Virtual Service Pilot, allowing Volunteers who
15 returned to the United States and other United
16 States citizens to work remotely with international
17 partners on community projects across sectors like
18 health, education, and agriculture. The Virtual Serv-
19 ice Pilot expanded rapidly, demonstrating the poten-
20 tial for virtual service to complement traditional
21 Peace Corps work, providing flexible opportunities
22 for such Volunteers to contribute globally from
23 home.

24 (15) Returned Volunteers promote a better un-
25 derstanding of other peoples and cultures when they

1 share their experiences and knowledge about their
2 service overseas with Americans at home, the third
3 goal of the Peace Corps described in paragraph
4 8(C). With regard to the third goal, the Peace
5 Corps' Congressional Budget Justification for Fiscal
6 Year 2026 states that by increasing mutual under-
7 standing and lasting ties between the people of the
8 United States and other countries, the Peace Corps
9 helps create better trading partners, strengthens re-
10 lationships with allies, inhibits extremism, and coun-
11 teracts the growing influence of America's adver-
12 saries. Volunteers strengthen U.S. national security
13 through improved relations with host governments
14 and by showcasing America as an international lead-
15 er. The agency also helps cultivate the next genera-
16 tion of U.S. civic and business leaders. Volunteers
17 return home and, for long after the conclusion of
18 their service, contribute the adaptive leadership and
19 entrepreneurial skills they gained during service to
20 American communities.

21 (16) On December 6, 1987, about 120,000 Vol-
22 unteers and Peace Corps staff received the Beyond
23 War Award. The inscription on the poster for the re-
24 cipients of the award reads, "Presented to the
25 120,000 Current and Returned Volunteers of the

1 Peace Corps ‘to learn peace, to live peace, and to
2 labor for peace, from the beginning of their service
3 to the end of their lives.’ A Peace Corps mission
4 statement.”.

5 (17) Members of the 107th Congress nominated
6 the Peace Corps for the Nobel Peace Prize. In a
7 June 27, 2002, letter to the Nobel Peace Prize Com-
8 mittee, 10 members of the 107th Congress signed
9 the letter saying, “The impact of Volunteers on
10 international peace through understanding and co-
11 operation goes far beyond development projects. Vol-
12 unteers bring people and cultures together. They
13 share ideas and ideals of their home community, but
14 they also learn to speak the language, eat the food,
15 sing the songs, and incorporate the qualities of their
16 host communities into their own lives. They travel
17 overseas to represent the United States, and they re-
18 turn home to represent the world within the United
19 States. The central mission of all Volunteers, both
20 overseas and after they return home, is peace. The
21 Peace Corps and the community of Returned Peace
22 Corps Volunteers, represented by the National Peace
23 Corps Association, create the climate, the conditions,
24 the momentum, and the spirit of peace that is need-

1 ed all over the world. For this reason, they deserve
2 the Nobel Peace Prize.”.

3 (18) In February 2011, Members of the 112th
4 Congress recommended to President Barack Obama
5 that the Peace Corps should be nominated for a
6 Nobel Peace Prize. The letter to President Obama,
7 authored by Congressman Sam Farr, said, “For a
8 half-century Peace Corps has served as a vehicle of
9 peace and hope for impoverished communities
10 around the world. Now more than ever, as the world
11 suffers from divisive transnational conflicts and es-
12 calating threats, Peace Corps continues to stand as
13 an unparalleled beacon of peace and optimism. Be-
14 stowing the Peace Corps with the Nobel Peace Prize
15 will undoubtedly work to promote volunteerism and
16 inspire the next generation of Americans to be
17 peaceful stewards of both their country and the
18 world.”.

19 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
20 gress that—

21 (1) the Volunteers should be acknowledged and
22 thanked publicly for their service to the United
23 States and their host countries whenever the appro-
24 priate occasions arise. Retired United States Navy
25 Admiral James Stavridis, former North Atlantic

1 Treaty Organization Supreme Allied Commander,
2 said, “What someone brings when they come back
3 from typically two years [of Peace Corps service] is
4 just a remarkable sense of our nation and a remark-
5 able sense of the world, and really a . . . stronger
6 sense of themselves and being part of those bigger
7 things. As a retired military guy . . . people con-
8 stantly come up to me and say, ‘Admiral, thank you
9 for your service.’ And it means a lot to me. It means
10 a lot to every veteran to hear that. So whenever I
11 do an interview where I have a chance to, I say to
12 Peace Corps Volunteers, ‘Thank you for your serv-
13 ice.’”;

14 (2) the people of the United States are grateful
15 and indebted to Volunteers for their excellence in
16 numerous professional fields, their essential and
17 dedicated contributions to communities of their host
18 countries, their effective means of communicating
19 the American spirit of peace and friendship, and for
20 their sharing of their experiences overseas with indi-
21 viduals in the United States;

22 (3) on behalf of the United States, Congress ex-
23 presses the highest public gratitude for the distin-
24 guished contributions of Volunteers for 65 years.
25 The Congressional Gold Medal is an appropriate

1 award to recognize the outstanding achievements of
2 Volunteers for their valued service to the United
3 States, and their role in promoting world peace and
4 friendship, as a significant component of United
5 States foreign policy; and

6 (4) the production of the gold medal be expedited so that the medal can be presented to the
7 Peace Corps at a respectful ceremony, either at the
8 Capitol Rotunda or at another suitable location, not
9 later than September 22, 2026.

11 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
13 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
14 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
15 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a single
16 gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration to the
17 Director of the Peace Corps in the District of Columbia,
18 in recognition of the Peace Corps volunteers and their
19 dedicated and distinguished service to our Nation and pro-
20 motion of world peace and friendship.

21 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
22 presentation described in subsection (a), the Secretary of
23 the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”)
24 shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices,
25 and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

1 (c) THE PEACE CORPS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
3 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
4 shall be given to the Peace Corps headquarters,
5 where it shall be available for display as appropriate
6 and made available for research.

7 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
8 Congress that the Director of the Peace Corps
9 should make the gold medal, awarded pursuant to
10 this Act, available for display elsewhere, particularly
11 at appropriate locations associated with Peace Corps
12 volunteers and that preference should be given to lo-
13 cations affiliated with the Peace Corps.

14 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

15 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
16 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at
17 a price sufficient to cover the costs of the bronze medals,
18 including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and
19 overhead expenses.

20 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

21 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
22 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
23 51 of title 31, United States Code.

24 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
25 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals

1 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
2 items.

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

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

10 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALES.**—Amounts received from
11 the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under sec-
12 tion 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Pub-
13 lic Enterprise Fund.

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