

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1235

To award a congressional gold medal to Ray Charles in recognition of his many contributions to the Nation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

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

A BILL

To award a congressional gold medal to Ray Charles in recognition of his many contributions to the Nation.

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 The Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) Ray Charles, one of America's greatest and
6 most influential musical artists and an international
7 cultural icon, died in Los Angeles on June 10, 2004.

8 (2) In a career that spanned more than 50
9 years, Ray Charles enjoyed immense fame across
10 America and the world, among all races, ages and

1 classes of people and was the recipient of 12
2 Grammy awards, including the Grammy for Lifetime
3 Achievement in 1987.

4 (3) With his unique baritone voice and vibrant
5 personality, he broke all musical conventions, blend-
6 ing blues, gospel, jazz, pop and rock music to create
7 his own incomparable musical songbook.

8 (4) His rendition of “America the Beautiful”
9 has been described as the country’s national hymn,
10 while his rendition of “Georgia” was designated the
11 official State song of Georgia.

12 (5) Among the Nation’s most renowned artists
13 of any genre, Ray Charles was honored by the Ken-
14 nedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1986 as one
15 of the most respected singers of his generation.

16 (6) Ray Charles, who was as popular among
17 White as Black audiences, shattered traditional divi-
18 sions between Black and White music.

19 (7) His multiracial appeal enhanced the move-
20 ment toward racial equality during the Civil Rights
21 movement.

22 (8) As a supporter of that Movement, he per-
23 formed benefit concerts and provided additional fi-
24 nancial support to causes led by his friend, Rev. Dr.
25 Martin Luther King.

1 (9) He was a strong opponent of the racist
2 Apartheid system in South Africa, refusing to per-
3 form for segregated audiences in that country.

4 (10) A financial backer of the state of Israel,
5 Ray Charles once described Blacks and Jews as
6 “bound together by a common history of persecu-
7 tion”.

8 (11) Ray Charles was born on September 23,
9 1930, in Albany, Georgia, grew up in extreme pov-
10 erty with his mother and 2 siblings in Greenville,
11 Florida, lost his sight at the age of 7, due to glau-
12 coma, and was orphaned at 15.

13 (12) He overcame poverty, racial discrimina-
14 tion, and personal failures to become an immensely
15 respected and dazzling figure in American culture, a
16 fighter against injustice at home and abroad.

17 (13) Whether plaintive or rousing, the music of
18 Ray Charles transformed the everyday lives, pain,
19 and joy of the common people into songs that reso-
20 nated with and inspired people of all nationalities,
21 races, and classes.

22 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

23 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
24 the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tem-
25 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements

1 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, to the per-
2 sonal representative of Ray Charles a gold medal of appro-
3 priate design in recognition of his many contributions to
4 the Nation.

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

11 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

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

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

20 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
21 **OF SALE.**

22 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 hereby authorized to be charged against the United States
24 Mint Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed

1 \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under
2 section 2.

3 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
4 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
5 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
6 Fund.

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