

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 247

To posthumously award a Congressional gold medal to Maya Angelou in recognition of her achievements and contributions to American culture and the civil rights movement.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 2015

Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. FOSTER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To posthumously award a Congressional gold medal to Maya Angelou in recognition of her achievements and contributions to American culture and the civil rights movement.

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 “Maya Angelou Con-
5 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that:

1 (1) Dr. Maya Angelou, born Marguerite Ann
2 Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4, 1928,
3 and raised in Arkansas, was a prominent and cele-
4 brated author, poet, educator, producer, actress,
5 filmmaker, and civil rights activist.

6 (2) Dr. Maya Angelou published a myriad of
7 literary works enshrining in history her storied life
8 as an icon of the civil rights movement.

9 (3) Hailed for her talents as a performing artist
10 at an early age, Dr. Maya Angelou toured Europe
11 with a production of the Gershwin opera “Porgy
12 And Bess” in 1955 and released her first album in
13 1957.

14 (4) Committed to furthering the work of Dr.
15 Martin Luther King, Dr. Maya Angelou served as a
16 leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Con-
17 ference during the Civil Rights Movement.

18 (5) In 1969, Dr. Maya Angelou penned the
19 autobiography “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”,
20 which catapulted her to international acclaim for its
21 vivid and honest depiction of the experience of Black
22 women in the Jim Crow era.

23 (6) Dr. Maya Angelou wrote the screenplay and
24 composed the score for the 1972 film “Georgia,

1 Georgia”; her script was the first by an African-
2 American woman to be filmed.

3 (7) Dr. Maya Angelou was the first African-
4 American to serve as an Inaugural Poet, authoring
5 and reciting the poem “Pulse of Morning” in 1993.

6 (8) A trailblazer in literature and poetry, Dr.
7 Maya Angelou bravely explored the ways in which
8 socially marginalizing forces affected African-Amer-
9 ican women.

10 (9) Dr. Maya Angelou was honored with the
11 Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011, the Lincoln
12 Medal in 2008, and the National Medal of Arts in
13 2000 for her exceptional contributions to American
14 culture as an author and poet.

15 (10) As a distinguished educator, Dr. Maya
16 Angelou received over 30 honorary degrees and
17 served as the Reynolds Professor of American Stud-
18 ies at Wake Forest University from 1982 to 2014.

19 (11) Dr. Maya Angelou passed away on May
20 28, 2014, in her North Carolina home at age 86,
21 leaving behind a legacy of literary achievement and
22 an indelible mark on the movement for civil rights.

23 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

24 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
25 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-

1 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
2 for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of Congress,
3 of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration
4 of Dr. Maya Angelou in recognition of her achievements
5 and contributions to American culture and the civil rights
6 movement.

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

13 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
15 gold medal in honor of Dr. Maya Angelou under
16 subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the
17 Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available
18 for display as appropriate and made available for re-
19 search.

20 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
21 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution shall
22 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
23 available for display, particularly at the National
24 Museum of African American History and Culture,
25 or for loan as appropriate so that it may be dis-

1 played elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate
2 locations associated with the life of Dr. Maya
3 Angelou.

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
7 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
8 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
9 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
10 and the cost of the gold medal.

11 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under
13 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
14 of title 31, United States Code.

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

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