

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4682

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Mercury 13, in recognition of their historic accomplishments and their work for gender equity, and in recognition of their important example of women in STEM fields.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 17, 2023

Ms. HOULAHAN (for herself, Mrs. KIM of California, Ms. STEVENS, Mrs. LESKO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. ROSS, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. ALLRED, and Ms. BONAMICI) 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

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Mercury 13, in recognition of their historic accomplishments and their work for gender equity, and in recognition of their important example of women in STEM fields.

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 “Mercury 13 Congres-  
5 sional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The Mercury 13 was a group of women who  
4 participated in the First Lady Astronaut Trainees  
5 (FLATs) Program, a privately funded project test-  
6 ing women pilots for astronaut fitness in the 1960s.

7 (2) These women underwent the same psycho-  
8 logical and physical testing that Dr. William Ran-  
9 dolph Lovelace was simultaneously putting male pi-  
10 lots through to determine their candidacy for space  
11 travel as part of the NASA Mercury Project.

12 (3) Members of the Mercury 13, though their  
13 training was not part of the NASA program, out-  
14 performed the Mercury 7 astronauts chosen for  
15 space travel in certain tests, and these women paved  
16 the way for other women in space.

17 (4) None of the members of the Mercury 13  
18 were ever able to go to space due to gender barriers,  
19 but they opened the door for female pilots and astro-  
20 nauts down the line.

21 (5) Two of the women, Geraldyn “Jerrie” Cobb  
22 and Jane “Janey” Briggs Hart, spoke at a Congres-  
23 sional Hearing before the Subcommittee of the  
24 House Committee on Science and Astronautics to  
25 advocate for the continuation of their program,  
26 which led to an investigation into discrimination on

1 the basis of sex two years before the Civil Rights Act  
2 was passed.

3 (6) A motion to honor these women was in-  
4 cluded in the Congressional Record in 2007 during  
5 the 110th Congress. The resolution, H. Res. 421,  
6 honored the trailblazing accomplishments of the  
7 Mercury 13 and encouraged young women to follow  
8 in their footsteps and pursue careers in aviation, as-  
9 tronautics, engineering, and science.

10 (7) The Mercury 13 are:

- 11 (A) Myrtle “K” Cagle.
- 12 (B) Geraldyn “Jerrie” Cobb.
- 13 (C) Jan Dietrich.
- 14 (D) Marion Dietrich.
- 15 (E) Mary Wallace “Wally” Funk.
- 16 (F) Jane “Janey” Briggs Hart.
- 17 (G) Jean Hixson.
- 18 (H) Gene Nora Stumbough Jessen.
- 19 (I) Irene Leverton.
- 20 (J) Sarah Lee Gorelick Ratley.
- 21 (K) Bernice Trimble Steadman.
- 22 (L) Geraldine “Jerri” Sloan Truhill.
- 23 (M) Rhea Hurrle Allison Woltman.

1 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of  
3 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-  
4 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements  
5 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a single  
6 gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration of the  
7 Mercury 13, in recognition of their historic accomplish-  
8 ments and their work for gender equity, and in recognition  
9 of their important example of women in STEM fields.

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

16 (c) NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the  
18 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal  
19 shall be given to the National Air and Space Mu-  
20 seum of the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall  
21 be available for display as appropriate and made  
22 available for research.

23 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of  
24 Congress that the National Air and Space Museum  
25 should make the gold medal received under para-  
26 graph (1) available for display elsewhere, particu-

1 larly at other appropriate locations associated with  
2 the Mercury 13, and that preference should be given  
3 to locations affiliated with the Smithsonian Institu-  
4 tion.

5 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

6 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
7 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 at  
8 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,  
9 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

10 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

11 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medal struck pursuant  
12 to this Act is a national medal for purposes of chapter  
13 51 of title 31, United States Code.

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

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

20 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is  
21 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
22 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-  
23 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant  
24 to this Act.

1       (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—The amounts received  
2 from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under  
3 section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint  
4 Public Enterprise Fund.

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