

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5922

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Sarah Keys Evans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 9, 2021

Mr. BUTTERFIELD (for himself, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, and Mr. CARSON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Sarah Keys Evans, and for other purposes.

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 “Sarah Keys Evans
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Sarah Keys Evans was born on April 18,
2 1929, in Washington, North Carolina, in a town
3 called Keysville, the second oldest of seven children.

4 (2) Sarah Keys, an Army veteran and civil
5 rights pioneer, is a living example that change is
6 possible if we are willing to stand up and fight for
7 what is right.

8 (3) Before the 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks and
9 the Montgomery bus boycott that followed, there was
10 Sarah Keys Evans. Her refusal to give up her seat
11 on an interstate charter bus prompted the landmark
12 court case, Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach Company,
13 in which the Interstate Commerce Commission
14 (ICC) outlawed the segregation of Black passengers
15 in buses traveling across State lines.

16 (4) On August 1, 1952, Women's Army Corps,
17 Private First Class Sarah Keys, boarded a bus in
18 Trenton, New Jersey, for her first home visit to
19 Washington, North Carolina, since joining the mili-
20 tary. The bus she boarded would take her directly to
21 her North Carolina destination without any required
22 bus changes.

23 (5) Once the bus reached Roanoke Rapids,
24 North Carolina, a new driver took over the bus and
25 as was custom, went through the bus and rechecked

1 tickets. When he came to Ms. Keys, he told her to
2 give up her seat to a White Marine who boarded the
3 bus in Roanoke Rapids and move to the back of the
4 bus. Tired from her long journey and understanding
5 her rights, Sarah refused.

6 (6) Six years prior, in 1946, there was a Su-
7 preme Court decision (*Morgan v. Virginia*) that said
8 it was illegal to practice passenger segregation on
9 interstate buses, but local jurisdictions found ways
10 to circumvent Federal laws.

11 (7) Frustrated with her persistence, the bus
12 driver announced that all passengers would be mov-
13 ing to a different bus, but “that woman” who re-
14 fused to change her seat, referring to Ms. Keys,
15 would not be allowed to board the new bus and
16 would not be allowed to continue the trip.

17 (8) Shortly thereafter, two police officers ar-
18 rived at the bus terminal, took Sarah by the arms
19 into a patrol car and drove her to the Roanoke Rap-
20 ids police station. Because she refused to be sub-
21 jected to unjust discrimination and prejudice, she
22 was forced to stay in jail overnight and was fined
23 \$25.00 (would be \$240.00 today) before her release.

1 (9) Once Sarah arrived home and informed her
2 family of the injustice she endured, her father en-
3 couraged her to seek legal action.

4 (10) The National Association for the Advance-
5 ment of Colored People (NAACP) referred the fam-
6 ily to attorney Dovey Johnson Roundtree, a Captain
7 in the Women’s Army Corps, who brought her case
8 before the ICC. The ICC meeting in the District of
9 Columbia took place on May 12, 1954. It was de-
10 cided by only one member of the ICC.

11 (11) New York Congressman Adam Clayton
12 Powell, Jr., agreed it was not fair that the other 10
13 members of the ICC were not involved in the deci-
14 sion. Congressman Powell helped persuade the ICC
15 to reconsider its decision.

16 (12) After the Supreme Court decision on
17 *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954, and
18 with the support of Department of Justice Attorney
19 General Herbert Brownell, the ICC reached a new
20 decision. A majority of the ICC members had de-
21 cided that it was wrong for people on State-to-State
22 trips to be forced to sit in certain seats on a bus be-
23 cause of the color of their skin and that it was
24 against the law.

1 (13) The ICC decision on November 25, 1955,
2 went further than the Supreme Court's ruling in
3 1946 which had outlawed only unfair laws that a
4 State might make, not rules that a bus company
5 might make.

6 (14) In *Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach Com-*
7 *pany*, the ICC ruled in favor of Keys Evans. In their
8 decision, the Commission found the Interstate Com-
9 merce Act forbids segregation as the practice sub-
10 jects passengers to “unjust discrimination, and
11 undue and unreasonable prejudice and disadvantage,
12 in violation of section 216(d) of the Interstate Com-
13 merce Act and is therefore unlawful”.

14 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

15 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
16 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
17 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
18 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
19 medal of appropriate design to Mrs. Sarah Keys Evans,
20 in recognition of her achievements.

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

1 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 (a) STRIKING OF DUPLICATES.—Under such regula-
3 tions as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may
4 strike duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under
5 section 3.

6 (b) SELLING OF DUPLICATES.—The Secretary may
7 sell such duplicates under subsection (a) at a price suffi-
8 cient to cover the costs of such duplicates, including labor,
9 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

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

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

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

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