

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3155

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Oskar Schindler and Varian Fry in recognition of their contributions to the Nation and humanity.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 3 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000

Mr. LAUTENBERG introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Oskar Schindler and Varian Fry in recognition of their contributions to the Nation and humanity.

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) More than 13,000,000 people were killed
6 during the Holocaust, including Jews, Gypsies, Slavs
7 (Poles, Ukrainians, and Belorussians), homosexuals,
8 and the disabled—each exterminated because Adolf

1 Hitler viewed them as “subhuman” to the Aryan
2 race.

3 (2) Nazi persecution, arrests, and deportations
4 were directed against all Jewish families, as well as
5 many others, without concern for age. Innocent men,
6 women, and children faced starvation, illness, brutal
7 labor, and other indignities until they were con-
8 signed to the gas chambers.

9 (3) When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, de-
10 struction began immediately and in a merciless fash-
11 ion. Jews were herded into crowded ghettos, ran-
12 domly beaten, humiliated, and capriciously mur-
13 dered. Jewish property and businesses were sum-
14 marily destroyed, or appropriated by the SS, and
15 sold to Nazi “investors”, one of whom was Oskar
16 Schindler.

17 (4) Oskar Schindler set up a business in an old
18 enamel works factory in Poland. His workforce con-
19 sisted of enslaved Jews from the Krakow Ghetto.
20 Schindler learned of the horrible atrocities com-
21 mitted by Hitler’s regime as he got to know some of
22 the forced workers there. In response, he managed
23 to convince the Nazis that his factory, and more im-
24 portantly, its trained workers, were vital to the Ger-

1 man war effort, thus preventing their deportation to
2 death camps.

3 (5) Oskar Schindler used all of the means at
4 his disposal to ensure the safety of those who
5 worked in his factory. Even his wife Emilie's jewels
6 were sold, to buy food, clothes, and medicine for the
7 workers. A secret sanatorium was set up in the fac-
8 tory with medical equipment purchased on the black
9 market. There, Emilie Schindler looked after the
10 sick and wounded.

11 (6) Even though Oskar Schindler had a large
12 mansion placed at his disposal close to the factory,
13 he spent every night in his office so that he could
14 intervene should the Gestapo pay a visit. He was de-
15 tained by the Gestapo twice, but used his connec-
16 tions to get released.

17 (7) With his own life at stake, Schindler em-
18 ployed all his powers of persuasion. He bribed,
19 fought, and begged to save Jewish men, women, and
20 children from the gas chambers.

21 (8) Oskar Shindler saved the lives of 1,200
22 Jews from deportation to Nazi death camps.

23 (9) On April 28, 1962, Oskar Schindler was
24 named a "Righteous Gentile" by Yad Vashem.

1 (10) Varian Fry, together with a small group of
2 unlikely associates, succeeded in assisting nearly
3 2,000 artists, musicians, writers, scholars, politi-
4 cians, labor leaders, and their families to leave hos-
5 tile territories in France, either legally or illegally.
6 This effort came to be called the “Emergency Res-
7 cue Committee”.

8 (11) Varian Fry offered aid and advice to Jews
9 and antifascist refugees who found themselves
10 threatened with extradition to Nazi Germany under
11 Article 19 of the Franco-German Armistice—the
12 “Surrender on Demand clause”.

13 (12) Though risking his personal security in the
14 face of both Gestapo and Vichy officials, Fry did
15 what was necessary to save as many of the refugees
16 as possible.

17 (13) Varian Fry aided in the rescue of nearly
18 2,000 individuals, including artists Marc Chaggall,
19 Andre Breton, and Max Ernst.

20 (14) The United States Holocaust Memorial
21 Council awarded Varian Fry its highest honor, the
22 Eisenhower Liberation Medal in 1991.

23 (15) In 1996, Yad Vashem posthumously hon-
24 ored Fry as the first American “Righteous Among

1 the Nations”, and the French government awarded
2 him the Croix de Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur.

3 (16) The actions of Oskar Schindler and Varian
4 Fry serve as testimony to all people that even under
5 the worst of circumstances, the most ordinary of us
6 can act courageously.

7 (17) Oskar Schindler and Varian Fry are true
8 heroes and humanitarians, deserving of honor by the
9 United States Government.

10 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

11 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is
12 authorized—

13 (1) to award to Oskar Schindler, posthumously,
14 on behalf of Congress, a gold medal of appropriate
15 design honoring Oskar Schindler in recognition of
16 his contributions to the Nation; and

17 (2) to award to Varian Fry, posthumously, on
18 behalf of Congress, a gold medal of appropriate de-
19 sign honoring Varian Fry in recognition of his con-
20 tributions to the Nation.

21 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
22 awards referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
23 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
24 retary”) shall strike gold medals with suitable emblems,

1 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
2 retary.

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

4 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
5 bronze, of the gold medals struck pursuant to section 2,
6 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,
7 and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, includ-
8 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead ex-
9 penses, and the cost of the gold medals.

10 **SEC. 4. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

11 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national
12 medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United
13 States Code.

14 **SEC. 5. FUNDING.**

15 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is
16 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
17 Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000
18 to pay for the cost of the medals authorized by this Act.

19 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the
20 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
21 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
22 Fund.

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