

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3001

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Raoul Wallenberg, in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

Mr. MEEKS (for himself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. HAYWORTH, and Mr. GRIMM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Raoul Wallenberg, in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

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 “Raoul Wallenberg Cen-
5 tennial Celebration Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) Raoul Wallenberg was born in Europe on
9 August 4, 1912, to Swedish Christian parents.

1 (2) In 1935, he graduated from the University
2 of Michigan in Ann Arbor, completing a five-year
3 program in three-and-a-half years.

4 (3) In a letter to his grandfather, Wallenberg
5 wrote of his time in America: “I feel so at home in
6 my little Ann Arbor that I’m beginning to sink down
7 roots here and have a hard time imagining my leav-
8 ing it. . . . Every now and then I feel strange when
9 I think about how tiny my own country is and how
10 large and wonderful America is.”

11 (4) Raoul returned to Sweden, where he began
12 a career as a businessman, and afterwards, a Swed-
13 ish diplomat.

14 (5) In 1936, Raoul’s grandfather arranged a
15 position for him at the Holland Bank in Haifa, Pal-
16 estine. There Raoul began to meet young Jews who
17 had already been forced to flee from Nazi persecu-
18 tion in Germany. Their stories affected him deeply.

19 (6) He was greatly troubled by the fate of Jews
20 in Europe, confiding to actress Viveca Lindfors the
21 horrific plight of Jews under Nazi Europe.

22 (7) Under the direction of President Franklin
23 D. Roosevelt, the War Refugee Board was estab-
24 lished in January 1944 to aid civilians that fell vic-
25 tim to the Nazi and Axis powers in Europe.

1 (8) One of War Refugee Board's top priorities
2 was protection of the 750,000 Hungarian Jews still
3 alive.

4 (9) It was decided that Raoul Wallenberg, aged
5 31 at the time, would be most effective in protecting
6 Jews and victims of the Nazis in Hungary under the
7 War Refugee Board. He was recruited by Iver
8 Olsen, an agent for the Office of Strategic Services
9 and sent to Budapest, Hungary, under his official
10 profession as a Swedish diplomat. He was instructed
11 to use passports and other creative means to save as
12 many lives as possible.

13 (10) Wallenberg created a new Swedish pass-
14 port, the Schutzpass, which looked more imposing
15 and official than the actual Swedish passport. He re-
16 portedly put up huge place cards of it throughout
17 Budapest to make the Nazis familiar with it. He
18 unilaterally announced that it granted the holder im-
19 munity from the death camps. The Schutzpasses
20 alone are credited with saving 20,000 Jewish lives.

21 (11) In one example of his heroism, Wallenberg
22 was told of a Nazi plot to round up several thousand
23 Jewish women and acted swiftly to save them.
24 Former Wallenberg staffer, Agnes Adachi, recalls
25 the time when she and other staff, spent the whole

1 night making around 2,000 Schutzpasses before 6
2 a.m. They were all completed and personally deliv-
3 ered to the women in time to save their lives.

4 (12) Using the money the United States put
5 into the War Refugee Board, Wallenberg was able to
6 purchase about thirty buildings, which he used as
7 hospitals, schools, soup kitchens, and safe houses for
8 over 8,000 children whose parents have already been
9 deported or killed.

10 (13) Tommy Lapid, a young boy who was stay-
11 ing with his mother in a Swedish safe house (his fa-
12 ther was already dead), gave an eyewitness account
13 of how his family was helped by Wallenberg and the
14 War Refugee Board: “One morning, a group of
15 Hungarian Fascists came into the house and said
16 that all the able-bodied women must go with them.
17 We knew what this meant. My mother kissed me
18 and I cried and she cried. We knew we were parting
19 forever and she left me there, an orphan to all in-
20 tents and purposes. Then two or three hours later,
21 to my amazement, my mother returned with the
22 other women. It seemed like a mirage, a miracle. My
23 mother was there—she was alive and she was hug-
24 ging me and kissing me, and she said one word:
25 Wallenberg.”.

1 (14) Even as the war was coming to a close,
2 Wallenberg remained vigilant and attentive to the
3 people under his care. Adolf Eichmann, the SS colo-
4 nel charged with the extermination of Jews in East-
5 ern Europe, was determined to exterminate the
6 70,000 Jews kept as prisoners in a guarded ghetto
7 in Budapest. As soon as Wallenberg heard of the
8 plot, he sent Pal Szalay, an Arrow-Crossman senior
9 official, who defected and turned to Wallenberg.
10 Szalay was sent to speak to General Schmidhuber,
11 who was ordered to spearhead the ghetto extermi-
12 nation in Budapest. Szalay informed Schmidhuber
13 that, seeing as the war was coming to an end, if the
14 planned massacre took place, Wallenberg would see
15 to it personally that Schmidhuber would be pros-
16 ecuted as a war criminal and hanged. The plans
17 were ultimately abandoned and considered Wallen-
18 berg's last big victory.

19 (15) Of the 120,000 Hungarian Jews that sur-
20 vived, Raoul Wallenberg, acting under the War Ref-
21 ugee Board, is credited with saving an estimated
22 100,000 of them in a six-month period.

23 (16) Raoul Wallenberg's fate remains a mys-
24 tery. In January 13, 1945, he contacted the Rus-
25 sians in an effort to secure food for the Jews under

1 his protection—as he was still working hard to pro-
2 tect them.

3 (17) In 1981, President Ronald Reagan made
4 Raoul Wallenberg an honorary citizen of the United
5 States, an honor only previously extended to Win-
6 ston Churchill.

7 (18) These findings show that Raoul Wallen-
8 berg showed exceptional heroism and bravery with
9 his actions during the holocaust. Working with the
10 War Refugee Board, a United State’s agency, he
11 was able to save about 100,000 Hungarian Jews,
12 many of which were later able to immigrate to the
13 United States.

14 (19) Indeed, hundreds of thousands of Amer-
15 ican Jews can directly or indirectly attribute their
16 own lives to Raoul Wallenberg’s actions during
17 World War II. Many of the people Wallenberg saved
18 have been influential citizens contributing to Amer-
19 ican institutions and culture, including Congressman
20 Tom Lantos (February 1, 1928–February 11,
21 2008), Annette Lantos, and the Liska Rebbe, Rabbi
22 Yoizef (Joseph) Friedlander, who carried forth the
23 Liska Hassidic dynasty from Hungary to the United
24 States after being saved by Raoul Wallenberg.

1 (20) His actions and character make him an ex-
2 cellent contender for a Congressional Gold Medal in
3 time for the centennial of his birth, to celebrate his
4 achievements and humanitarian accomplishments.

5 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

6 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
7 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
8 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
9 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
10 medal of appropriate design to the next of kin or personal
11 representative of Raoul Wallenberg, in recognition of his
12 achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

13 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the
14 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
15 of the Treasury shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
16 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the
17 Secretary.

18 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

19 Under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treas-
20 ury may prescribe, the Secretary may strike duplicate
21 medals in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to
22 section 3 and sell such duplicate medals at a price suffi-
23 cient to cover the costs of the duplicate medals (including
24 labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead ex-
25 penses) and the cost of the gold medal.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
3 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
4 51 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

8 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
9 **SALE.**

10 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF CHARGES.—There is author-
11 ized to be charged against the United States Mint Public
12 Enterprise Fund, such amounts as may be necessary to
13 pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant to this
14 Act.

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

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