

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1377

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LYNCH, and Ms. ROSS) 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:

8 (1) Sarah Keys Evans was born on April 18,
9 1929, in Washington, North Carolina, in a town
10 called Keysville, the second oldest of seven children.

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

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

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

20 (5) Once the bus reached Roanoke Rapids,
21 North Carolina, a new driver took over the bus and
22 as was custom, went through the bus and rechecked
23 tickets. When he came to Ms. Keys, he told her to
24 give up her seat to a White Marine who boarded the
25 bus in Roanoke Rapids and move to the back of the

1 bus. Tired from her long journey and understanding
2 her rights, Sarah refused.

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

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

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

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

24 (10) The National Association for the Advance-
25 ment of Colored People (NAACP) referred the fam-

1 ily to attorney Dovey Johnson Roundtree, a Captain
2 in the Women's Army Corps, who brought her case
3 before the ICC. The ICC meeting in the District of
4 Columbia took place on May 12, 1954. It was de-
5 cided by only one member of the ICC.

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

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

20 (13) The ICC decision on November 25, 1955,
21 went further than the Supreme Court's ruling in
22 1946 which had outlawed only unfair laws that a
23 State might make, not rules that a bus company
24 might make.

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

9 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

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

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

21 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

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

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

6 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
7 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
8 31, United States Code.

9 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
10 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
11 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

○