

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1817

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, in recognition of his pioneering work in collecting and preserving the history and culture of the African diaspora.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 3, 2025

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. SOTO, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. CARSON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania) 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

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, in recognition of his pioneering work in collecting and preserving the history and culture of the African diaspora.

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 “Arturo Alfonso
5 Schomburg Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) Arturo Alfonso Schomburg was born on
4 January 24, 1874, in Santurce, Puerto Rico, to a
5 Puerto Rican father of German descent and an Afro-
6 Caribbean mother from St. Croix.

7 (2) In his youth, a teacher told Schomburg that
8 people of African descent had no history, heroes, or
9 accomplishments, which inspired him to dedicate his
10 life to proving this notion wrong by collecting evi-
11 dence of the contributions of Africans and their de-
12 scendants.

13 (3) At the age of 17, Schomburg immigrated to
14 New York City, where he became an active member
15 of the intellectual community during the Harlem
16 Renaissance, contributing significantly to the pro-
17 motion of African and African American culture and
18 history.

19 (4) Schomburg amassed a personal collection of
20 over 10,000 items related to Black history and the
21 African diaspora, which he made accessible to the
22 public.

23 (5) His collection featured original newspapers
24 published by Frederick Douglass, poems by Phillis
25 Wheatley, letters from Toussaint Louverture, books

1 and journals by Paul Cuffe, and music composed by
2 Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

3 (6) During the 1920s, Schomburg was an active
4 member of the Negro Society for Historical Re-
5 search and the American Negro Academy, writing on
6 the history of the global African diaspora and Cuban
7 poets of African descent.

8 (7) In 1926, the New York Public Library ac-
9 quired Schomburg's collection, which became the
10 foundation for the Schomburg Center for Research
11 in Black Culture in Harlem, a world-renowned insti-
12 tution for the study of the global Black experience.

13 (8) Schomburg's archive has grown to more
14 than 10 million items.

15 (9) Schomburg's efforts have inspired genera-
16 tions of scholars, writers, and artists to explore and
17 celebrate the rich history and culture of the African
18 diaspora.

19 (10) The Congressional Gold Medal would be
20 an appropriate way to honor Schomburg's legacy
21 and his role in laying the foundation for future
22 scholarship and global recognition of Black contribu-
23 tions to society.

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

2 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
4 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
5 posthumous presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold
6 medal of appropriate design to Arturo Alfonso Schomburg,
7 in recognition of his pioneering work in collecting and pre-
8 serving the history and culture of the African diaspora.

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

15 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
17 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
18 shall be given to the National Museum of African
19 American History and Culture of the Smithsonian
20 Institution, where it shall be displayed as appro-
21 priate and made available for research.

22 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
23 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
24 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
25 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other

1 locations and events associated with Arturo Alfonso
2 Schomburg.

3 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

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

9 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
10 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
11 51 of title 31, United States Code.

12 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—or purposes of sections
13 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
14 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
15 items.

16 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
17 **SALE.**

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

23 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
24 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section

- 1 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
- 2 Enterprise Fund.

