

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8227

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in
recognition of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 9, 2026

Ms. NORTON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative
coins in recognition of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

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 “Paul Laurence Dunbar
5 Commemorative Coin Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

8 (1) Paul Laurence Dunbar was one of the first
9 influential African-American poets in American lit-
10 erature, writing such classics as “Majors and Mi-

1 nors” and “Lyrics of Lowly Life”, and composing
2 the lyrics to “In Dahomey”, the first all-African-
3 American musical produced on Broadway;

4 (2) Paul Laurence Dunbar was born on June
5 27, 1872, to freed slaves Joshua and Matilda Mur-
6 phy Dunbar;

7 (3) Paul Laurence Dunbar first published a se-
8 ries of poems at age 14 in the Dayton Herald;

9 (4) in 1893, Paul Laurence Dunbar published
10 a series of poems in a work entitled “Oak and Ivy”;

11 (5) by the late 1890s, Paul Laurence Dunbar
12 had become a prominent author, having had his
13 poems published in such major national newspapers
14 and magazines as The New York Times;

15 (6) over his career, Paul Laurence Dunbar pub-
16 lished more collections of poems, short stories, and
17 novels;

18 (7) Paul Laurence Dunbar died on February 9,
19 1906, at 33 years of age;

20 (8) Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School
21 (hereafter referred to as Dunbar High School) was
22 established in the District of Columbia in 1870 as
23 the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth, and
24 was the first public high school for African-American
25 students in the country;

1 (9) the Preparatory High School for Colored
2 Youth was renamed in 1916 in honor of Paul Lau-
3 rence Dunbar;

4 (10) the Dunbar Alumni Federation (hereafter
5 in this Act referred to as the “Federation”) was or-
6 ganized in 2002 to provide scholarships and other fi-
7 nancial support to students and graduates of Dun-
8 bar High School;

9 (11) the Federation promotes and supports
10 scholarship efforts, along with school and community
11 activities;

12 (12) the Federation leverages the prestige of
13 Dunbar High School and its distinguished alumni to
14 enhance the education of Dunbar High School stu-
15 dents;

16 (13) the Federation promotes Dunbar High
17 School alumni from more than 35 years of grad-
18 uating classes through their scholarship efforts, com-
19 munity activities, and other endeavors to support
20 Dunbar High School;

21 (14) the Federation helps finance such student
22 development activities as the Debate Team, the
23 Band, the Ski Team, the Junior Reserve Officer
24 Training Corps, and athletics;

1 (15) the Federation funds faculty, staff, and
 2 parent appreciation and development activities; and
 3 (16) the Federation collects and assembles arti-
 4 facts and memorabilia from alumni for historical
 5 and legacy displays to chronicle Dunbar High
 6 School’s rich history.

7 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

8 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In recognition and celebration
 9 of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Secretary of the Treasury
 10 (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall
 11 mint and issue the following coins:

12 (1) \$5 GOLD COINS.—Not more than 50,000 \$5
 13 coins, which shall—

14 (A) weigh 8.359 grams;

15 (B) have a diameter of 0.850 inches; and

16 (C) contain not less than 90 percent gold.

17 (2) \$1 SILVER COINS.—Not more than 400,000
 18 \$1 coins, which shall—

19 (A) weigh 26.73 grams;

20 (B) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

21 (C) contain not less than 90 percent silver.

22 (3) HALF-DOLLAR CLAD COINS.—Not more
 23 than 750,000 half-dollar coins which shall—

24 (A) weigh 11.34 grams;

25 (B) have a diameter of 1.205 inches; and

1 (C) be minted to the specifications for half-
2 dollar coins contained in section 5112(b) of title
3 31, United States Code.

4 (b) **LEGAL TENDER.**—The coins minted under this
5 Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of
6 title 31, United States Code.

7 (c) **NUMISMATIC ITEMS.**—For purposes of sections
8 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins
9 minted under this Act shall be considered to be numis-
10 matic items.

11 **SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.**

12 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The design for the coins minted
13 under this Act shall be emblematic of Paul Laurence Dun-
14 bar.

15 (b) **DESIGNATIONS AND INSCRIPTIONS.**—On each
16 coin minted under this Act there shall be—

17 (1) a designation of the denomination of the
18 coin;

19 (2) an inscription of the year “2028”; and

20 (3) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”, “In
21 God We Trust”, “United States of America”, and
22 “E Pluribus Unum”.

23 (c) **SELECTION.**—The design for the coins minted
24 under this Act shall be—

1 (1) selected by the Secretary after consultation
2 with—

3 (A) the Commission of Fine Arts; and

4 (B) the Federation; and

5 (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory
6 Committee.

7 **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.**

8 (a) **QUALITY OF COINS.**—Coins minted under this
9 Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

10 (b) **PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.**—The Secretary may
11 issue coins minted under this Act only during the 1-year
12 period beginning on January 1, 2028.

13 **SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.**

14 (a) **SALE PRICE.**—The coins issued under this Act
15 shall be sold by the Secretary at a price based upon the
16 sum of—

17 (1) the face value of the coins;

18 (2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with
19 respect to such coins; and

20 (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins
21 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,
22 overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

23 (b) **BULK SALES.**—The Secretary shall make bulk
24 sales of the coins issued under this Act at a reasonable
25 discount.

1 (c) PREPAID ORDERS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall accept
3 prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act
4 before the issuance of such coins.

5 (2) DISCOUNT.—Sale prices with respect to pre-
6 paid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a rea-
7 sonable discount.

8 **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—All sales of coins minted under
10 this Act shall include a surcharge as follows:

11 (1) A surcharge of \$35 per coin for the \$5 coin.

12 (2) A surcharge of \$10 per coin for the \$1 coin.

13 (3) A surcharge of \$5 per coin for the half-dol-
14 lar coin.

15 (b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of
16 title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by
17 the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act
18 shall be promptly paid by the Secretary to the Federation.

19 (c) EXEMPTION TO COMMEMORATIVE COIN PRO-
20 GRAM LIMITATIONS.—This Act shall—

21 (1) not be subject to section 5112(m)(1) of title
22 31, United States Code; and

23 (2) not be a “commemorative coin program” for
24 purposes of such section.

1 (d) AUDIT.—The recipient described under sub-
2 section (b) shall be subject to the audit requirements of
3 section 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with
4 regard to the amounts received under subsection (b).

5 **SEC. 8. FINANCIAL ASSURANCES.**

6 The Secretary shall take such actions as may be nec-
7 essary to ensure that—

8 (1) minting and issuing coins under this Act
9 will not result in any net cost to the United States
10 Government; and

11 (2) no funds, including applicable surcharges,
12 are disbursed to the recipient designated in section
13 7 until the total cost of designing and issuing all of
14 the coins authorized by this Act (including labor,
15 materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses,
16 marketing, and shipping) is recovered by the United
17 States Treasury, consistent with sections 5112(m)
18 and 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code.

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