

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Red Cross Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas (SRAO) program, also known as the “Donut Dollies”, who served honorably during the Vietnam conflict.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SHERRILL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Red Cross Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas (SRAO) program, also known as the “Donut Dollies”, who served honorably during the Vietnam conflict.

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 “Donut Dollies Congres-
5 sional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Vietnam War, (1954–1975), a conflict
2 that pitted the communist Government of North
3 Vietnam and its allies in South Vietnam, known as
4 the Viet Cong, against the Government of South
5 Vietnam, involved thousands of U.S. servicemembers
6 and volunteers over its course. U.S. military advis-
7 ers, present in small numbers throughout the 1950s,
8 were introduced on a large scale beginning in 1961,
9 and active combat units were introduced in 1965. As
10 early as February 1962, the number of American
11 military forces in Vietnam warranted the assignment
12 of American Red Cross field directors.

13 (2) Women were not subject to the Vietnam-era
14 draft, but thousands volunteered. The first American
15 Red Cross Field Directors were sent to South Viet-
16 nam in February 1962. The last Red Cross staff
17 members to serve in-country departed in March
18 1973. Official records indicate that a total of 1,120
19 women served with the Red Cross in Vietnam during
20 that 11-year period. Of that number, 627 were
21 young women who were part of the organization’s
22 Supplemental Recreation Activities Overseas
23 (SRAO) program.

24 (3) Based on Red Cross estimates, around
25 280,500 servicemen took part in these recreation

1 programs and the women, affectionately known as
2 “Donut Dollies”, traveled 27,000 miles by jeep,
3 truck, airplane, and helicopter every month. Red
4 Cross officials estimate that, during the seven years
5 the program was in operation, the women logged
6 over 2,125,000 miles. The first SRAO unit opened
7 at Danang in September 1965. Others quickly fol-
8 lowed at Bien Hoa, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Air
9 Force and Army bases, Dian, Quang Tri, Phu Bai,
10 Lai Khe, Dong Tam, Qui Nhon, Xuan Loc, and
11 more. In all, there were 28 SRAO unit locations
12 throughout the country.

13 (4) Military commanders expressed high praise
14 for the Red Cross volunteers, calling the services of
15 the organization “indispensable” and “prime fac-
16 tors” in their efforts to maintain the high morale of
17 their men and to look after their welfare. Writing to
18 Red Cross national headquarters in 1968, General
19 William Westmoreland, then commander of the U.S.
20 forces in Southeast Asia, stated, “Serving our men
21 on the battlefields here in Vietnam, the American
22 Red Cross is a hotline to the folks back home, an
23 oasis in the heat of battle, and a comfort during
24 hospitalization.”.

1 (5) These Red Cross volunteers shared with
2 military personnel the hardship and privation of life
3 in a war zone and were subject to the dangers of
4 war. Many staff were injured. Five American Red
5 Cross workers died in-country. Three of those were
6 women, Hanna E. Crews, Virginia E. Kirsch, and
7 Lucinda J. Richter, all of whom were members of
8 the SRAO program.

9 (6) The Donut Dollies volunteered to be sent to
10 the frontlines to support service members directly
11 engaged with the enemy during the Vietnam conflict.
12 The extraordinary efforts of these volunteers
13 throughout the extent of America's involvement in
14 the Vietnam conflict is deserving of official recogni-
15 tion.

16 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

17 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZATION.—The Speaker
18 of the House of Representatives and the President pro
19 tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrange-
20 ments for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of
21 a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration to
22 members of the Red Cross Supplemental Recreational Ac-
23 tivities Overseas (SRAO) program, also known as the
24 “Donut Dollies”, who served honorably during the Viet-
25 nam conflict.

1 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
2 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
3 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
4 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
5 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
6 retary.

7 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
9 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
10 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
11 it shall be available for display as appropriate and
12 made available for research.

13 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
14 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
15 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
16 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
17 appropriate locations associated with the “Donut
18 Dollies”.

19 (d) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the
20 Congress that the United States Mint should expedite pro-
21 duction of the gold medal under this Act, so that the serv-
22 ice and sacrifice of “Donut Dollies” volunteers can be rec-
23 ognized and honored in a timely manner.

1 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

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

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

11 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
12 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
13 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.