

Public Law 106-175  
106th Congress

An Act

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, in recognition of his accomplishments as a priest, a chaplain, and a humanitarian.

Mar. 5, 2000

[H.R. 3557]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

31 USC 5111  
note.

**SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

The Congress finds the following:

(1) His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor is a man of deep compassion, great intellect, and tireless devotion to both spiritual guidance and humanitarianism.

(2) John Joseph O'Connor was born on January 15, 1920, in southwest Philadelphia, the son of Thomas J. O'Connor and Mary Gomple O'Connor.

(3) John Cardinal O'Connor joined the Navy Chaplains Corps in June 1952 during the Korean Conflict, served with elements of both the Navy and the Marine Corps, and saw combat action in Vietnam. He later served as chaplain of the United States Naval Academy and was appointed as Chief of Chaplains of the Navy with the grade of rear admiral, from which position he retired four years later, in May 1979. He was ordained a Bishop by Pope John Paul II on May 27, 1979. He then served as Vicar General of the Military Ordinariate (now the Archdiocese for the Military Services) until 1984.

(4) John Cardinal O'Connor became Bishop of Scranton, Pennsylvania, on May 10, 1983, was named Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of New York on January 31, 1984, and was elevated to the rank of Cardinal by Pope John Paul II on May 25, 1985.

(5) John Cardinal O'Connor has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public and parochial school education. He has supported and strengthened Catholic schools in their mission to provide a quality education to students of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in the Archdiocese of New York and throughout the Nation.

(6) John Cardinal O'Connor has provided comfort and care to the sick, the elderly, and the disabled and provided millions of people with spiritual and emotional support. He led the effort to open New York State's first AIDS-only unit at St. Claire's Hospital, remaining a frequent visitor and volunteer at the hospital.

(7) Throughout his life, John Cardinal O'Connor has also served on behalf of the poor and the oppressed, as exemplified by his assistance on behalf of famine victims in Ethiopia and victims in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina.

(8) Throughout his career, John Cardinal O'Connor has been a strong advocate of interfaith healing and understanding, particularly among individuals of the Catholic and Jewish faiths, and has played a significant role in helping to establish diplomatic ties between the Vatican and Israel.

(9) John Cardinal O'Connor took the inspiring words of the Declaration of Independence—"Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"—and transformed them into a statement of purpose. He has dedicated his life's work to protecting and defending these inalienable rights of all people.

(10) John Cardinal O'Connor celebrated his 80th birthday on January 15, 2000, and has displayed remarkable courage and the true power of his faith in carrying on his life's work in the face of life-threatening illness.

#### **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

(a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The President is authorized to present, on behalf of the Congress, a gold medal of appropriate design to John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, in recognition of his accomplishments as a priest, a soldier, and a humanitarian.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For the purpose of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

#### **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2 at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

#### **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

The medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

#### **SEC. 5. FUNDING AND PROCEEDS OF SALE.**

(a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—There is hereby authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medals authorized by this Act.

(b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

Approved March 5, 2000.

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#### **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3557:**

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 146 (2000):

Feb. 15, considered and passed House.

Mar. 1, considered and passed Senate.