



H.R. 6455 - NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 6455 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) on July 10, 2008. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, but was never considered.

H.R. 6455 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 15, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 6455 directs the Secretary of the Treasury to commemorate the 50th anniversary of NASA by issuing gold and silver coins in the amounts of \$50 and \$1 respectively. The bill requires up to 50,000 gold coins and 300,000 silver coins to be minted. The bill requires the coin sales to include a surcharge of \$50 per \$50 coin, and \$10 per \$1 coin. These coins will be considered legal tender.

The gold \$50 coin will be designed with an image of the sun and a design emblematic of the sacrifice of the United States astronauts who lost their lives in the line of duty over the course of the space program. The \$1 coin will bear an image of planets, as well as images emblematic of the contributions of the research and space centers.

The bill requires the first \$4 million in proceeds of coin sales to be distributed to the NASA Family Assistance Fund for financial assistance to the families of NASA personnel who die as a result of their duties. H.R. 6455 requires that the next \$500,000 million be distributed to the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational (D.R.E.M.E.) Science Literacy Foundation and the Challenger Center for Space Science Education. The remaining proceeds will be distributed to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for the preservation, maintenance, and display of space artifacts at the National Air and Space Museum.

H.R. 6455 authorizes the Secretary of Treasury to sell bronze duplicates of the \$50 coins.

BACKGROUND

Created on July 29, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is the federal agency primarily responsible for the United States' public space program and aerospace research. The agency was established largely in response to the launch of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* in 1957. The current NASA Administrator is Michael D. Griffin, who supervises about 17,000 employees. NASA was most recently authorized by the NASA Authorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-155).

NASA has accomplished several scientific and exploratory milestones during its fifty-year operation. In 1961, NASA launched the first-manned spacecraft, Freedom 7. In 1969, NASA was responsible for the Apollo 11 flight which landed a man on the Moon and returned to Earth safely. Today, NASA coordinates American efforts with the International Space Shuttle and operates the Hubble Space Telescope.

COST

There was no Congressional Budget Office cost estimate available for H.R. 6455 as of July 14, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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