

110TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 2159

AN ACT

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “NASA 50th Anniver-
3 sary Commemorative Coin Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds that—

6 (1) the National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
7 istration began operation on October 1, 1958, with
8 about 8,000 employees and an annual budget of
9 \$100,000,000;

10 (2) over the next 50 years, the National Aero-
11 nautics and Space Administration has been involved
12 in many defining events which have shaped the
13 course of human history and demonstrated to the
14 world the character of the people of the United
15 States;

16 (3) among the many firsts by the National Aer-
17 onautics and Space Administration are that—

18 (A) on December 6, 1958, the United
19 States launched Pioneer 3, the first United
20 States satellite to ascend to an altitude of
21 63,580 miles;

22 (B) on March 3, 1959, the United States
23 sent Pioneer 4 to the Moon, successfully mak-
24 ing the first United States lunar flyby;

1 (C) on April 1, 1960, the United States
2 launched TIROS 1, the first successful mete-
3 rological satellite, observing Earth’s weather;

4 (D) on May 5, 1961, Freedom 7, carrying
5 Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr., was the first
6 American space flight involving human beings;

7 (E) on February 20, 1962, John Glenn be-
8 came the first American to circle the Earth,
9 making 3 orbits in his Friendship 7 Mercury
10 spacecraft;

11 (F) on December 14, 1962, Mariner 2 be-
12 came the first spacecraft to commit a successful
13 planetary flyby (Venus);

14 (G) on April 6, 1965, the United States
15 launched Intelsat I (also known as Early Bird
16 1), the first commercial satellite (communica-
17 tions), into geostationary orbit;

18 (H) on June 3 through 7, 1965, the sec-
19 ond piloted Gemini mission, Gemini IV, stayed
20 aloft for 4 days, and astronaut Edward H.
21 White II performed the first EVA or
22 “spacewalk” by an American;

23 (I) on June 2, 1966, Surveyor 1 became
24 the first American spacecraft to soft-land on
25 the Moon;

1 (J) on May 31, 1971, the United States
2 launched Mariner 9, the first mission to orbit
3 another planet (Mars) beginning November 13,
4 1971;

5 (K) on April 12, 1981, the National Aero-
6 nautics and Space Administration launched the
7 Space Shuttle Columbia on the first flight of
8 the Space Transportation System (STS-1).

9 (L) on June 18, 1983, the National Aero-
10 nautics and Space Administration launched
11 Space Shuttle Challenger (STS-7) carrying 3
12 mission specialists, including Sally K. Ride, the
13 first woman astronaut;

14 (M) in another historic mission, 2 months
15 later, the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
16 ministration launched STS-8 carrying the first
17 black American astronaut, Guion S. Bluford;
18 and

19 (N) on July 23, 1999, the Space Shuttle
20 Columbia's 26th flight was led by Air Force
21 Col. Eileen Collins, the first woman to com-
22 mand a Shuttle mission;

23 (4) on April 9, 1959, the National Aeronautics
24 and Space Administration unveiled the Mercury as-
25 tronaut corps, 7 men with "the right stuff": John

1 H. Glenn, Jr., Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Alan B.
2 Shepard, Jr., M. Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Co-
3 per, Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, and Donald K.
4 “Deke” Slayton;

5 (5) on May 25, 1961, President John F. Ken-
6 nedy, reflecting the highest aspirations of the Amer-
7 ican people, proclaimed: “I believe this Nation
8 should commit itself to achieving the goal, before
9 this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon
10 and returning him safely to Earth. No single space
11 project in this period will be more impressive to
12 mankind, or more important in the long-range explo-
13 ration of space; and none will be so difficult or ex-
14 pensive to accomplish.”;

15 (6) on September 19, 1961, the National Aero-
16 nautics and Space Administration announced that
17 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
18 center dedicated to human space flight would be
19 built in Houston, Texas;

20 (7) on February 17, 1973, the Manned Space-
21 craft Center in Houston was renamed the Lyndon
22 B. Johnson Space Center;

23 (8) on December 21, 1968, Apollo 8 took off
24 atop a Saturn V booster from the Kennedy Space
25 Center for a historic mission to orbit the Moon;

1 (9) as Apollo 8 traveled outward, the crew fo-
2 cused a portable television camera on Earth and for
3 the first time humanity saw its home from afar, a
4 tiny, lovely, and fragile “blue marble” hanging in
5 the blackness of space;

6 (10) this transmission and viewing of Earth
7 from a distance was an enormously significant ac-
8 complishment and united the Nation at a time when
9 American society was in crisis over Vietnam, race re-
10 lations, urban problems, and a host of other difficul-
11 ties;

12 (11) on July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts
13 Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin made the
14 first lunar landing mission while Michael Collins or-
15 bited overhead in the Apollo command module;

16 (12) Armstrong set foot on the surface of the
17 Moon, telling the millions of listeners that it was
18 “one small step for a man, one giant leap for man-
19 kind”, and Aldrin soon followed and planted an
20 American flag, but omitted claiming the land for the
21 United States, as had routinely been done during
22 European exploration of the Americas;

23 (13) the 2 Moon walkers left behind an Amer-
24 ican flag and a plaque bearing the inscription:
25 “Here Men From The Planet Earth First Set Foot

1 Upon the Moon. Jul. 1969 A.D. We Came in Peace
2 for All Mankind.”;

3 (14) on April 24, 1990, the Hubble Space Tele-
4 scope was launched into space aboard the STS-31
5 mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery, and since
6 then, the Hubble has revolutionized astronomy, while
7 expanding our knowledge of the universe and inspir-
8 ing millions of scientists, students, and members of
9 the public with its unprecedented deep and clear im-
10 ages of space;

11 (15) on July 4, 1997, the Mars Pathfinder
12 landed on Mars and on January 29, 1998, an Inter-
13 national Space Station agreement among 15 coun-
14 tries met in Washington, DC, to sign agreements to
15 establish the framework for cooperation among the
16 partners on the design, development, operation, and
17 utilization of the Space Station;

18 (16) the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
19 ministration’s stunning achievements over the last
20 50 years have been won for all mankind at great
21 cost and sacrifice; in the quest to explore the uni-
22 verse, many National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
23 istration employees have lost their lives, including
24 the crews of Apollo 1, the Space Shuttle Challenger,
25 and the Space Shuttle Columbia;

1 (17) the success of the United States space ex-
2 ploration program in the 20th Century augurs well
3 for its continued leadership in the 21st Century,
4 such leadership being attributable to the remarkable
5 and indispensable partnership between the National
6 Aeronautics and Space Administration and its 10
7 space and research centers, including—

8 (A) from small spacecraft to supercom-
9 puters, science missions and payloads to ther-
10 mal protection systems, information technology
11 to aerospace, the Ames Research Center in
12 California's Silicon Valley, which provides prod-
13 ucts, technologies, and services that enable
14 NASA missions and expand human knowledge.

15 (B) the Dryden Flight Research Center,
16 the leading center for innovative flight research;

17 (C) the Glenn Research Center, which de-
18 velops power, propulsion, and communication
19 technologies for space flight systems and aero-
20 nautics research;

21 (D) the Goddard Space Flight Center,
22 which specializes in research to expand knowl-
23 edge on the Earth and its environment, the
24 solar system, and the universe through observa-
25 tions from space;

1 (E) the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the
2 leading center for robotic exploration of the
3 Solar System;

4 (F) the Johnson Space Center, which man-
5 ages the development, testing, production, and
6 delivery of all United States human spacecraft
7 and all human spacecraft-related functions;

8 (G) the Kennedy Space Center, the gate-
9 way to the Universe and world leader in pre-
10 paring and launching missions around the
11 Earth and beyond;

12 (H) the Langley Research Center, which
13 continues to forge new frontiers in aviation and
14 space research for aerospace, atmospheric
15 sciences, and technology commercialization to
16 improve the way the world lives;

17 (I) the Marshall Space Flight Center, a
18 world leader in developing space transportation
19 and propulsion systems that accelerate explo-
20 ration and scientific discovery, including the
21 Michoud Assembly Facility, which has been a
22 world-class facility since 1961 for fabrication of
23 large space structures, including the Saturn V
24 and the Space Shuttle External Tank, and
25 which will have a critical role in the Constella-

1 tion program, including manufacturing major
2 pieces of the Orion crew capsule, the Ares I
3 upper stage, and the Ares V core stage; and

4 (J) the Stennis Space Center, which is re-
5 sponsible for rocket propulsion testing and for
6 partnering with industry to develop and imple-
7 ment remote sensing technology;

8 (18) the United States should pay tribute to
9 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
10 and to its successful partnerships with the space and
11 research centers, by minting and issuing a com-
12 memorative silver dollar coin; and

13 (19) the surcharge proceeds from the sale of a
14 commemorative coin would generate valuable fund-
15 ing for the National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
16 istration Families Assistance Fund, for the purposes
17 of providing need-based financial assistance to the
18 families of any National Aeronautics and Space Ad-
19 ministration personnel who lose their lives as a re-
20 sult of injuries suffered in the performance of their
21 official duties, and for other worthy and important
22 purposes.

23 **SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.**

24 (a) DENOMINATIONS.—In commemoration of the
25 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aer-

1 onautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of the
2 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
3 retary”) shall mint and issue the following coins:

4 (1) \$50 GOLD COINS.—Not more than 50,000

5 \$50 gold coins, which shall—

6 (A) weigh 33.931 grams;

7 (B) have a diameter of 32.7 millimeters;

8 and

9 (C) contain 1 troy ounce of fine gold.

10 (2) \$1 SILVER COINS.—Not more than 300,000

11 \$1 coins of each of the 9 designs specified in section

12 4(a)(3)(B), which shall—

13 (A) weigh 26.73 grams;

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

15 (C) contain 90 percent silver and 10 per-

16 cent copper.

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

20 (c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
21 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted
22 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

23 (d) MINTAGE LEVEL LIMIT.—Notwithstanding the
24 mintage level limit described under section
25 5112(m)(2)(A)(ii) of title 31, United States Code, the Sec-

1 retary may mint and issue not more than 300,000 of each
2 of the 9 \$1 coins authorized to be minted under this Act.

3 **SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.**

4 (a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins
6 minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the 50
7 years of exemplary and unparalleled achievements of
8 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

9 (2) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On
10 each coin minted under this Act, there shall be—

11 (A) a designation of the value of the coin;

12 (B) an inscription of the year “2008”; and

13 (C) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”,
14 “In God We Trust”, “United States of Amer-
15 ica”, and “E Pluribus Unum”, and such other
16 inscriptions as the Secretary may determine to
17 be appropriate for the designs of the coins.

18 (3) COIN IMAGES.—

19 (A) \$50 COINS.—

20 (i) OBVERSE.—The obverse of the
21 \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear
22 an image of the sun.

23 (ii) REVERSE.—The reverse of the
24 \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear
25 a design emblematic of the sacrifice of the

1 United States astronauts who lost their
2 lives in the line of duty over the course of
3 the space program.

4 (iii) HIGH RELIEF.—The design and
5 inscriptions on the obverse and reverse of
6 the \$50 coins issued under this Act shall
7 be in high relief.

8 (B) \$1 COINS.—

9 (i) OBVERSE.—The obverse of the \$1
10 coins issued under this Act shall bear 9
11 different designs, each of which shall con-
12 sist of an image of 1 of the 9 planets of
13 the solar system, including Earth.

14 (ii) REVERSE.—The reverse of the \$1
15 coins issued under this Act shall bear dif-
16 ferent designs, each of which shall be em-
17 blematic of the contributions of the re-
18 search and space centers, subject to the
19 following requirements:

20 (I) EARTH COIN.—The reverse of
21 the \$1 coins issued under this Act
22 which bear an image of the Earth on
23 the obverse shall bear images emblem-
24 atic of, and honoring, the discoveries
25 and missions of the National Aero-

1 nautics and Space Administration, the
2 Mercury, Gemini, and Space Shuttle
3 missions and other manned Earth-or-
4 biting missions, and the Apollo mis-
5 sions to the Moon.

6 (II) JUPITER COIN.—The reverse
7 of the \$1 coins issued under this Act
8 which bear an image of the planet Ju-
9 piter on the obverse shall include a
10 scientifically accurate depiction of the
11 Galilean moon Europa and depict
12 both a past and future mission to Eu-
13 ropa.

14 (III) SATURN COIN.—The reverse
15 of the \$1 coins issued under this Act
16 which bear an image of the planet
17 Saturn on the obverse shall include a
18 scientifically accurate depiction of the
19 moon Titan and depict both a past
20 and a future mission to Titan.

21 (IV) PLUTO (AND OTHER DWARF
22 PLANETS) COIN.—The reverse of the
23 \$1 coins issued under this Act which
24 bear an image of the planet Pluto on
25 the obverse shall include a design that

1 is emblematic of telescopic exploration
2 of deep space by the National Aero-
3 nautics and Space Administration and
4 the ongoing search for Earth-like
5 planets orbiting other stars.

6 (4) REALISTIC AND SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE
7 DEPICTIONS.—The images for the designs of coins
8 issued under this Act shall be selected on the basis
9 of the realism and scientific accuracy of the images
10 and on the extent to which the images are reminis-
11 cent of the dramatic and beautiful artwork on coins
12 of the so-called “Golden Age of Coinage” in the
13 United States, at the beginning of the Twentieth
14 Century, with the participation of such noted sculp-
15 tors and medallie artists as James Earle Fraser, Au-
16 gustus Saint-Gaudens, Victor David Brenner, Ad-
17 olph A. Weinman, Charles E. Barber, and George T.
18 Morgan.

19 (b) SELECTION.—The design for the coins minted
20 under this Act shall be—

21 (1) selected by the Secretary, after consultation
22 with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics
23 and Space Administration and the Commission of
24 Fine Arts; and

1 (2) reviewed by the Citizens Coin Advisory
2 Committee.

3 **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.**

4 (a) **QUALITY OF COINS.**—Coins minted under this
5 Act shall be issued in proof quality only.

6 (b) **MINT FACILITY.**—Only 1 facility of the United
7 States Mint may be used to strike any particular combina-
8 tion of denomination and quality of the coins minted under
9 this Act.

10 (c) **PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.**—Notwithstanding any
11 other provision of law, including section 7(d), the Sec-
12 retary—

13 (1) may accept orders for the coins authorized
14 under this Act during the period beginning on Janu-
15 ary 1, 2008 and ending on December 31, 2008; and

16 (2) may mint and issue such coins required to
17 fulfill such orders during the period beginning on
18 January 1, 2008 and ending on December 31, 2009.

19 (d) **EXCEPTION TO PROGRAM LIMITATION.**—Not-
20 withstanding any other provision of law, the minting or
21 issuance of coins under this Act in 2009 does not—

22 (1) preclude the Secretary from including a sur-
23 charge on the issuance of any other commemorative
24 coin minted or issued in 2009; and

1 (2) be counted against the annual 2 commemo-
2 rative coin program minting and issuance limitation
3 under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States
4 Code.

5 (e) ISSUANCE OF GOLD COINS.—Each gold coin
6 minted under this Act may be issued only as part of a
7 complete set with 1 of each of the 9 \$1 coins minted under
8 this Act.

9 **SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.**

10 (a) SALE PRICE.—The coins issued under this Act
11 shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum
12 of—

13 (1) the face value of the coins;

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

16 (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins
17 (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery,
18 overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

19 (b) PREPAID ORDERS.—

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

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

1 (c) PRESENTATION.—In addition to the issuance of
2 coins under this Act in such other methods of presentation
3 as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Sec-
4 retary shall provide, as a sale option, a presentation case
5 which displays the \$50 gold coin in the center, surrounded
6 by the \$1 silver coins in elliptical orbits. All such presen-
7 tation cases shall bear a plaque with appropriate inscrip-
8 tions that include the names and dates of the spacecraft
9 missions on which United States astronauts lost their lives
10 over the course of the space program and the names of
11 such astronauts.

12 **SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.**

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

15 (1) A surcharge of \$50 per coin for the \$50
16 coin.

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

18 (3) A surcharge of \$1 per coin for any bronze
19 duplicate minted under section 8.

20 (b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of
21 title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by
22 the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act
23 shall be promptly distributed as follows:

24 (1) The first \$4,000,000 available for distribu-
25 tion under this section, to the NASA Family Assist-

1 ance Fund, for the purpose of providing need-based
2 financial assistance to the families of NASA per-
3 sonnel who lose their lives as a result of injuries suf-
4 fered in the performance of their official duties.

5 (2) Of amounts available for distribution after
6 the payment under paragraph (1), $\frac{1}{2}$ of the next
7 \$1,000,000 to each of the following:

8 (A) The Dr. Ronald E. McNair Edu-
9 cational (D.R.E.M.E.) Science Literacy Foun-
10 dation for the purposes of improving and
11 strengthening the process of teaching and
12 learning science, math, and technology at all
13 educational levels, elementary through college
14 through the promotion of innovative educational
15 programs.

16 (B) The Challenger Center for Space
17 Science Education, for the purposes of creating
18 positive learning experiences using space science
19 as a theme that raise student expectations of
20 success, fostering a long-term interest in mathe-
21 matics, science, and technology, and motivating
22 students to pursue careers in these fields.

23 (3) The remainder of the amounts available for
24 distribution after the payments under paragraphs
25 (1) and (2), to the Secretary of the Smithsonian In-

1 stitution for the preservation, maintenance, and dis-
2 play of space artifacts at the National Air and Space
3 Museum (including the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Cen-
4 ter).

5 (c) AUDITS.—The NASA Family Assistance Fund,
6 the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational Science Literacy
7 Foundation, the Challenger Center for Space Science Edu-
8 cation, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
9 shall be subject to the audit requirements of section
10 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with regard
11 to the amounts received under subsection (b).

12 (d) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a),
13 no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance
14 under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as
15 of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin
16 would result in the number of commemorative coin pro-
17 grams issued during such year to exceed the annual 2
18 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under
19 section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in
20 effect on the date of enactment of this Act). The Secretary
21 may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

22 **SEC. 8. BRONZE DUPLICATES.**

23 The Secretary may strike and sell bronze duplicates
24 of the \$50 gold coins authorized under this Act, at a price
25 determined by the Secretary to be appropriate. Such dupli-

1 cates shall not be considered to be United States coins
2 and shall not be legal tender.

Passed the Senate June 19, 2008.

Attest:

Secretary.

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To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.