

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Stephen Michael Gleason.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

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**A BILL**

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Stephen Michael  
Gleason.

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 “Stephen Michael Glea-  
5 son Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Stephen “Steve” Gleason was born March  
9 19, 1977, in Spokane, Washington to Mike and Gail  
10 Gleason.

1           (2) Steve attended Gonzaga Preparatory School  
2 for high school where he excelled as both a football  
3 and baseball player.

4           (3) In 1995, Steve enrolled at Washington  
5 State University where he was a 2-sport athlete for  
6 the baseball and football teams and helped the Cou-  
7 gars football team advance to the 1997 Rose Bowl.

8           (4) In 2000, Steve signed a professional football  
9 contract with the Indianapolis Colts of the National  
10 Football League as an undrafted free agent but  
11 later joined the New Orleans Saints in November of  
12 that same season.

13           (5) Steve would go on to play 7 more seasons  
14 as a member of the New Orleans Saints.

15           (6) Steve will always be remembered for his  
16 blocked punt on September 25, 2006, against the  
17 Atlanta Falcons, the night the Louisiana Superdome  
18 reopened for the first time after Hurricane Katrina  
19 in a game the Saints would win 23 to 3.

20           (7) In January, 2011 Steve was diagnosed with  
21 amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS, considered a  
22 terminal neuro-muscular disease.

23           (8) Following his diagnosis, Steve, with the lov-  
24 ing support of his wife, Michel, began a mission to  
25 show that patients can not only live but thrive after

1 a diagnosis of ALS and established The Gleason Ini-  
2 tiative Foundation also known simply as “Team  
3 Gleason”.

4 (9) At the time of his diagnosis, however, Steve  
5 said there will be “No White Flags”, which has be-  
6 come the mantra of Team Gleason.

7 (10) The Gleason Initiative Foundation helps  
8 provide individuals with neuromuscular diseases or  
9 injuries with leading edge technology, equipment and  
10 services, raises global awareness about ALS to find  
11 solutions and an end to the disease, and has helped  
12 hundreds of people with ALS experience life adven-  
13 tures they never thought possible after their diag-  
14 nosis.

15 (11) Steve’s story and mission have been told  
16 by the NFL Network, ESPN, HBO, ABC, CBS,  
17 CNN, and many local media outlets, as well as in a  
18 2016 documentary titled “Gleason”, which was her-  
19 alded at the Sundance Film Festival and premiered  
20 across the country with Variety calling the produc-  
21 tion “an emotional powerhouse”. The documentary  
22 won several awards, including the 2016 Washington,  
23 D.C. Area Film Critics Association Award for Best  
24 Documentary.

1           (12) Steve was named 1 of 2 Sports  
2 Illustrated’s Inspirations of the Year in 2014, has  
3 been a keynote speaker for Microsoft and at 2  
4 United Nations sponsored Social Innovation Sum-  
5 mits, and received the 2015 George S. Halas Cour-  
6 age Award, given to a NFL player, coach or staff  
7 member who overcomes the most adversity to suc-  
8 ceed.

9           (13) Steve helped advocate for the Steve Glea-  
10 son Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–40; 129 Stat.  
11 441), and the Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of  
12 2017, H.R. 2465, 115th Congress (2017), which  
13 permanently ensures people living with diseases such  
14 ALS have access to speech generating devices re-  
15 gardless of their setting, whether at home or a  
16 healthcare institution.

17           (14) In 2014, Steve and Team Gleason hosted  
18 a global summit to bring together researchers, pa-  
19 tients, caregivers, and all ALS stakeholders to create  
20 a plan to ultimately end ALS. That summit resulted  
21 in the single largest coordinated and collaborative  
22 ALS research project in the world, Answer ALS,  
23 which brings together nearly two dozen research in-  
24 stitutions, 1,000 patients and 20,000,000,000,000  
25 data points that are important to the project and

1 that will define the unknown pathways that will lead  
2 to treatments or finally a cure.

3 (15) In 2015, Steve and Microsoft worked to-  
4 gether to create a method for people who are com-  
5 pletely paralyzed to navigate their power wheelchairs  
6 with their eyes. Today, Steve, Microsoft and all  
7 wheelchair manufacturers are working collabo-  
8 ratively to make it widely available to all who need  
9 this technology. In addition, Microsoft has also made  
10 eye tracking technology part of all Windows 10  
11 products across the globe.

12 (16) In 2011, 10 months after his diagnosis,  
13 Steve and Michel made their most significant accom-  
14 plishment, becoming parents to their son Rivers.

15 (17) Steve and Michel Gleason continue to fight  
16 to find a solution for ALS so they can share many  
17 years together and as parents to Rivers.

18 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

19 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the  
20 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore  
21 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
22 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal  
23 of appropriate design to Stephen Michael Gleason.

24 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the  
25 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the

1 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-  
2 retary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems,  
3 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-  
4 retary.

5 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

6 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-  
7 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
8 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price  
9 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,  
10 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

11 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

12 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-  
13 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States  
14 Code.