

1 WOMAN 1: -- ground for Public Law 112-148 --

2 MAN 1: Stand up -- stand up.

3 WOMAN 1: -- which authorizes the Secretary of the
4 Treasury to strike a congressionally held recognition of Raoul
5 Wallenberg's achievements and heroic actions during the
6 Holocaust. And, also, according to the law, bronze duplicates
7 of the medal can be produced for public sale.

8 Raoul Wallenberg was born in 1912 in Sweden; and he
9 graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, later
10 returned to Sweden where he began a career as a businessman,
11 later becoming a Swedish diplomat. In 1936, Raoul's
12 grandfather arranged a position for him at the Holland Bank in
13 Palestine. It was there he began to meet young Jews who had
14 already been forced to flee from Nazi persecution in Germany.
15 In January 1944, under the direction of President Franklin D.
16 Roosevelt, the War Refugee Board or --

17 MR. FRIEDLANDER: -- to have this conversation with
18 my grandfather. And for us it's very important to
19 note -- was -- we are a -- he was the fourth [inaudible] in a
20 dynasty that traces its roots in a town called Liska, Hungary,
21 200 years ago. That's when the -- the dynasty was established.
22 And I asked my grandmother, I said, "How was my grandfather
23 safe?" And she looked at me and she said in Yiddish,
24 "(speaking Yiddish) Wallenberg." And she said it, like, so
25 matter-of-factly. And this is how I grew up, with

1 the -- with -- as -- as I grew up, I always had this image of
2 Wallenberg saving my grandfather. And I asked him how he got
3 the *schutzhauser*, the *schutzhauser*. And she didn't really know
4 much but bits and pieces of information we managed to gather,
5 and that remained with the -- that is -- that is the story of
6 how my grandfather was saved.

7 When I realized that the calendar would soon
8 commemorate the 100th-year centennial of the birth of Raoul
9 Wallenberg, I decided to establish the Wallenberg Commission,
10 which will -- with -- with -- with the -- with the sole purpose
11 and mission of commemorating his birth; because for us, Raoul
12 Wallenberg is still alive. We know that, obviously, you know,
13 the chances are very, very slim that he's actually alive with
14 us. But because there was never any conclusive evidence
15 to -- to prove that he's dead, we -- we -- we decided that --
16 let's celebrate his life. And how do we celebrate his life?
17 By remembering and commemorating and paying tribute that -- who
18 he saved.

19 And I wouldn't be here if not for Raoul Wallenberg.
20 And in our community, where most of the Hungarian survivors
21 live, they wouldn't be there. And I live in a community called
22 Borough Park. Borough Park is home to approximately 100,000
23 Jews. That will -- that's the same exact number of -- of -- of
24 who -- of how many people Raoul Wallenberg saved directly and
25 indirectly. It was -- for those that -- that know, the -- the

1 ghetto in Hungary, in Budapest, was about to be liquidated.
2 Besides the *schutzhauser* -- where he saved approximately, let's
3 say, 25-, 35,000 -- the 70 or so thousand that was left was
4 about to be liquidated; and Wallenberg intimidated the German
5 general and prevented him from sending them to Auschwitz,
6 threatening them with war crimes.

7 So he saved approximately the entire neighborhood
8 where we live; and that's what I tell people. I say, "Turn --
9 look around. You see this traffic jam? This wouldn't be here
10 if not for Raoul Wallenberg." So I'm giving you a very long
11 introduction, and I hope you won't -- I hope you won't -- I'm
12 not taking up too much time. So -- so when we -- when we
13 established the commission, we decided what better way to
14 commemorate Raoul Wallenberg by having the Congress pass the
15 Congressional Gold Medal legislation.

16 That allowed us to educate members of Congress and
17 members of the community. Because, sadly, those in my
18 generation don't even know who Raoul Wallenberg is; and it's
19 very sad. And I -- I decided that we -- that we must remind
20 the communities who were saved by Wallenberg so that he could
21 live on forever. So we -- we -- Senator Gillibrand introduced
22 the legislation, and we worked with her staff. On the -- on
23 the House side, Representative Gregory Meeks introduced the
24 legislation. And -- and former Representative Nan Hayworth was

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1 also very instrumental. And it was really a bipartisan effort,
2 and their staffs were -- were -- were unbelievably helpful.

3 We -- we passed this legislation; and we
4 accomplished, through the publicity of the bill, of the
5 legislation, to remind the world who Raoul Wallenberg was.
6 It's a fascinating story. I -- I'm sure everyone heard of him;
7 but if you -- if you need more information because of this --
8 this, there's -- there's several movies. There's one by, I
9 think, Richard Chamberlain and -- *Raoul Wallenberg: A Hero's*
10 *Story*. And then there's one in -- I think it's in German. I
11 think it's *Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg*. Both
12 are -- are -- are pretty much accurate. And there's so many
13 books.

14 It -- he was such a -- he -- it's like he was looking
15 for trouble. It's not like, you know, he was in Europe at the
16 time; and -- and he saw what was happening. He -- he -- he
17 could've just minded his own business, and he stayed until the
18 bitter end. They were -- they urged him, "Leave, leave,
19 leave." And he refused to do so. He just wanted to accomplish
20 more and more and more. And it's so sad because, you know,
21 there's no -- there's -- there's -- we don't know whatever
22 happened to him.

23 There -- there is no grave that the family can visit.
24 It's just -- it's just a question mark. You know, what do they
25 say, there's always the -- you know, when you want to -- you

1 know, when you want to conclude something -- you know, it -- so
2 it's very sad. So the -- the coin was designed by -- we worked
3 with -- with Betty, and -- and -- and she's unbelievably
4 helpful. The -- whoever would -- is the artist here who
5 designed it?

6 WOMAN 1: Over there.

7 MR. FRIEDLANDER: Oh, because she -- you gave us --

8 WOMAN 1: Over there on the right.

9 MR. FRIEDLANDER: Oh. Oh, I'm sorry. You gave us so
10 many -- so many options, and it was very hard to --

11 WOMAN 2: He led them onto a train bound for a
12 concentration camp. Shown in the background are Nazi soldiers
13 herding Jews on the train. The inscriptions are, "He lives on
14 forever through those he saved" and "One person can make a
15 difference." The artist felt that this just -- this design
16 pairs well with Obverse 12. Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, April.

18 MAN 2: Here is -- could you maybe describe for us
19 the changes [inaudible]?

20 CHAIRMAN: That's about what I'm going to do.

21 MAN 2: Eric, before you do, did Obverse 9 have a
22 pairing under the reverse, a preferred pairing? Obverse 9.

23 CHAIRMAN: While she -- while she's doing that,
24 before more committee members jump in here, I want to get into
25 technical questions, which is what -- what Donald's asking. So

1 if you have a -- a -- if you have a question that's not related
2 to commentary on the designs, be prepared to -- to bring that
3 forward here in just a moment. Let's get Donald's question
4 addressed first.

5 WOMAN 2: No, sir. We did not have any recommended
6 pairings by the artist.

7 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any others?

8 Okay. It's been our -- our tradition to help focus
9 our discussion on -- on designs that we feel we want to give
10 the most attention to when we -- especially when we're
11 presented with many designs, to go through an initial process
12 where we do a quick -- a poll, if you will, of the committee,
13 to determine if -- to what level each design has support from
14 the committee. And if we identify designs in this initial
15 process, where there really is no support from the committee,
16 then we can focus the balance of our time on those that -- that
17 we feel we want to consider.

18 So I'm gonna -- I'm gonna go through each design.
19 I'll ask that each one be brought up on the screen as we go
20 through; and I'll look for an indication from the committee, if
21 they want to continue considering any of these particular
22 designs. It only takes one committee member to take an
23 interest, and we'll put that in -- in the pile for further
24 consideration.

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1 If I don't see any indications, then I will set those
2 aside; and we'll take a record of those that we set aside. So
3 if we can start with Obverse No. 1. Is there support for
4 Obverse No. 1? Okay. I'm setting Obverse No. 1 aside.
5 Obverse No. 2.

6 MAN 3: Interest, yes.

7 MAN 4: Yes.

8 WOMAN 3: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN: Okay. There's interest in that. And 2A?
10 Interest in 2A? Okay. We'll set that one aside. 6?

11 MAN 5: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN: Okay. And, please, that extra
13 side -- we're setting aside, for the record, on the Reverses 3
14 and 4. Continuing consideration of 1, 2, 5, and 6. Again,
15 I'll ask the committee to focus their comments on those
16 designs. We will also, as we go around the table and share our
17 comments on these --

18 MR. FRIEDLANDER: Kind of, but I think the -- the
19 ones we selected on the -- on the front of the -- on the -- on
20 the -- on the obverse is more -- is more an accurate ...

21 MAN 6: Okay.

22 MR. FRIEDLANDER: The -- the -- the barbed wire,
23 I -- I hear what you're saying in that it obviously sends a
24 very strong message of -- of what he accomplished by allowing
25 people to break free. But he was -- his goal -- his -- the

1 *Schutzpass* was - was -- was the invention of -- I don't know
2 "the invention," but was -- it was what made Wallenberg famous.
3 That was his method of saving -- of saving Jews, was the
4 *Schutzpass*. He was never involved in the concentration camps.
5 So that's why I felt not to associate the barbed wire, which is
6 so dominant in -- in -- in Holocaust imagery, but rather
7 the -- the *Schutzpass*. And the train is also a true reflection
8 of history; because at some point, Wallenberg physically went
9 on top of trains and handed out *Schutzpasses*. Trains that were
10 on the way --

11 MAN 7: -- "lives on forever for those he saved" to
12 be on both. I was just thinking that it might be a -- if those
13 two were paired up, you could replace that with "Act of
14 Congress." So that would be on -- on the reverse of No. 6.
15 But the -- the other reverses -- the ones that were left to
16 consider, the -- the handing of the pass for -- for hearing
17 from the -- the contingency -- or the recipient or group or the
18 affinity group, is they -- they feel the pass is very
19 important. That's showing up in a couple of these different
20 reverses. The symbology in No. 5 is very, very well taken.
21 I -- I'm not sure how well that would be interpreted or how
22 easily that would be interpreted by people that didn't know the
23 story; but I -- I agree -- I agree with the group that the No.
24 6, you've got the human side of the -- the faces, the -- the
25 individuals that are hopefully hoping to receive a pass, as

1 well as the others in the background that, unfortunately, will
2 not receive a pass.

3 And it's showing it from his perspective, and I think
4 that's a very unique design feature that we haven't seen yet.
5 So 6 -- 6 has a lot of interest for me. That's all.

6 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mike. We went to my left last
7 time, so I think we'll start the motion to the right and --

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