

U.S. Senate Passes Legislation to Award Late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat With the Congressional Gold Medal

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(WASHINGTON) - History was made in the U.S. Senate when it unanimously passed a bill on Wednesday, August 22, to honor former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor that the United States government can bestow.

The bill, S.266, co-sponsored by 71 Senators was bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) as a way of reminding the world of Mr. Sadat's bold and courageous approach to achieving peace with the State of Israel in 1979.

Legislation to confer the Congressional Gold Medal must be co-sponsored by at least two-thirds of the Members of the House of Representatives (290 congresspeople) and of the Senate (67 senators) before it can be brought to the floor for a vote.

The late President Sadat was the first Arab leader to visit Israel and address the Knesset. He was the first to launch a peace initiative that culminated in Egypt being the first Arab state to officially recognize Israel. Anwar Sadat is widely acknowledged as a visionary who, in partnership with the United States and the late Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, negotiated a peace treaty between the two countries. Thereby, he is forever regarded as a champion of peace and a pioneer of diplomacy.

The Sadat Gold Medal Commission launched the effort to award the late President Sadat with the Congressional Gold Medal through a collaborative initiative by prominent American Jewish leaders, spearheaded by Mr. Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group, and Mr. Shafik Gabr, founder of the Shafik Gabr Foundation.

The mission of the Shafik Gabr Foundation is to enhance critical understanding and cooperation among young emerging leaders in the Arab world and the West through means of global exchanges. This initiative has earned Mr. Gabr the respect of leading American government officials and international leaders across a wide range of political views.

"Advocating for this Bill to become law allowed me to remind the Congress of the United States that great statesmen do exist, and that honoring Mr. Sadat meets the criteria for a Congressional Gold Medal whereby the Camp David Accords and the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel continue to serve the national security interests of the United States by preserving peace and serving as a foundation for partnership and dialogue in a region fraught with conflict and division." This sentiment was expressed by the Board of the Sadat Commission comprised of Mr. Jack Avital, Mr. Isaac Dabah, Mr. Andrew Friedman, Mr. Leon Goldenberg, Mr. Sol Goldner, Mr. Gil Kapen, Mr. Joseph B. Stamm, Mr. Stanley Treitel and Ambassador H. Russell Taub.

On October 6, 1981, President Anwar Sadat was assassinated for making peace with Israel. Then-President Reagan encapsulated his high regard for Mr. Sadat with these words: "There are times, there are moments in history, when the martyrdom of a single life can symbolize all that's wrong with an age and all that is



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L-R: H.E. Yasser Reda - Ambassador of Egypt to U.S., Isaac Dabah, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Ezra Friedlander, Sol Goldner, Jack Avital, Leon Goldenberg, Stanley Treitel.



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Ezra Friedlander with Shafik Gabr.

right about humanity. The noble remnants of such lives...can gain the force and power that endures and inspires and wins the ultimate triumph over the forces of violence, madness, and hatred."

Mr. Shafik Gabr, who serves as International Chairman of the Sadat Gold Medal Commission, said about President Sadat and about the bill's passage, "As an Egyptian who understands the importance of a strong Egyptian-American relationship that serves both countries' national security, I would like to thank Senators Hatch and Cardin for introducing and ensuring the passage of this truly historical legislation. The late President Sadat was a man ahead of his time. He was not only a voice for peace, but



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L-R: U.S. Senate President Pro Tempore Orrin Hatch, Ezra Friedlander.

also a person whose courage, conviction and dedication to achieve peace — regardless of any obstacles — were immense. He had the wisdom to bring nations and peoples together, and he was a man of sincere belief of what peace can bring. It is my hope that other leaders around the globe would understand the importance of peace and what it brings to their people, their region and the world. As we mark the 40th anniversary of [the] signing the Camp David Accords and celebrate the centennial of Anwar Sadat's birth, I am appreciative of the U.S. Senate for bestowing upon him this great honor."

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