

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5343

To provide for the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Hazel M. Johnson, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 6, 2019

Mr. RUSH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To provide for the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Hazel M. Johnson, and for other purposes.

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 “Hazel M. Johnson Me-
5 morial Stamp Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Hazel Johnson fought for environmental
9 justice in Chicago beginning in the 1970s and con-
10 tinuing through the rest of her life.

1 (2) When Johnson discovered that the South
2 Side of Chicago had the highest cancer rate of any
3 area in Chicago, she was inspired to investigate the
4 cancer rates, foul odors, and number of children
5 with respiratory illnesses in her own neighborhood,
6 the community of Altgeld Gardens on the South
7 Side of Chicago.

8 (3) Johnson discovered her community, Altgeld
9 Gardens, which is a public housing project, was built
10 on a landfill surrounded by toxicity, which polluted
11 the air, water, and land.

12 (4) Additionally, the Altgeld Gardens homes
13 had asbestos and elevated lead levels.

14 (5) This discovery inspired Johnson to create
15 the People for Community Recovery, an organization
16 which fights for a safer environment.

17 (6) Johnson and the People for Community Re-
18 covery fought to educate and empower the residents
19 of Altgeld Gardens, including providing workshops
20 and trainings, conducting health surveys, rallying
21 residents to protest contamination, and working with
22 youth in the community.

23 (7) The People for Community Recovery put
24 pressure on the Chicago Housing Authority to re-
25 move asbestos from Altgeld Gardens.

1 (8) Johnson’s fight for clean water led to the
2 installation of water and sewer lines by city health
3 officials in the far South Side neighborhood of Mary-
4 land Manor, where the existing well water was con-
5 taminated with cyanide and other toxins.

6 (9) Johnson used her vigilance and activism to
7 give low-income minority communities a voice and a
8 stake in the environmental justice fight by bringing
9 the conversation to personal, immediate, and urgent
10 concerns which directly impact communities inhab-
11 ited by people of color.

12 (10) Johnson also strove to hold both busi-
13 nesses and the government responsible for how their
14 actions impact the environment.

15 (11) Johnson was given the 1992 President’s
16 Environment and Conservation Challenge Award in
17 recognition of her environmental justice work.

18 (12) Notably, Johnson was instrumental in
19 pressuring President Bill Clinton to sign the Envi-
20 ronmental Justice Executive Order, which holds the
21 Federal Government accountable for urban commu-
22 nities exposed to pollution.

23 (13) In 2004, sociologist David Naguib Pellow
24 credited Johnson and the People for Community Re-
25 covery with putting “the South Side of Chicago on

1 the radar screen for activists and policy makers
2 around the United States who are concerned about
3 environmental racism”.

4 (14) On January 12, 2011, the Illinois General
5 Assembly, by way of a House Joint Resolution, des-
6 ignated “the portion of 130th Street from the
7 Bishop Ford Freeway to State Street in Chicago as
8 the ‘Hazel Johnson EJ Way’”.

9 (15) Johnson was a visionary, who was able to
10 foresee the impacts of failing to address environ-
11 mental and social justice conditions.

12 (16) Johnson’s work earned her the title of
13 “mother of the environmental justice movement”.

14 **SEC. 3. HAZEL M. JOHNSON COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE**
15 **STAMP.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Postmaster General shall
17 issue a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Hazel
18 M. Johnson.

19 (b) DENOMINATION; DESIGNS.—The commemorative
20 postage stamp issued under this Act shall be issued in the
21 denomination used for first class mail up to one ounce in
22 weight and shall bear such designs as the Postmaster Gen-
23 eral shall determine.

24 (c) ISSUANCE PERIOD.—The commemorative postage
25 stamp issued under this Act shall be placed on sale as

- 1 soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this
- 2 Act and shall be sold for such period thereafter as the
- 3 Postmaster General shall determine.

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