

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2026

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

We write to express our deep frustration that the Department of the Treasury is "not at present" planning to move forward with the long-standing effort to place Harriet Tubman on the twenty-dollar bill.¹ The process to celebrate Tubman through our currency included extensive public engagement and bipartisan recognition of her extraordinary contributions to our nation, but your recent decision ignores that and abandons years of work at Treasury to honor her legacy. We urge you to immediately reconsider and resume plans to create the new bill without further delay.

The long effort to feature a woman on U.S. currency gained momentum in 2015 when a grassroots movement, "Women on 20s", launched a public campaign to select a woman to appear on a new twenty-dollar bill in circulation before the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in 2020. After over 600,000 people participated in an online ballot, the public chose Harriet Tubman from an array of inspirational women.²

Now ten years after that campaign, the American people are understandably frustrated with the delay. While we acknowledge the creation of a new currency note is a multi-year process involving design, counterfeit protection and implementation into our financial system, the administration has released plans for a \$250 bill depicting President Trump to celebrate America's 250th birthday, a currency that would be illegal for the Treasury Department to issue under current law.³ You also released plans for multiple coins featuring President Trump's likeness for the semiquincentennial.⁴

Meanwhile, a woman has not been featured on modern American currency in over a century and recognition for their contributions to our nation are long overdue. If the administration is actively

¹ Semyon, C., & Popielarz, T. (2026, July 7). Exclusive: Trump Admin says it has abandoned plans for new Tubman \$20 Bill. Spectrum News. <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/rochester/politics/2026/07/06/trump-admin-says-it-has-abandoned-plans-for-new-tubman--20-bill>

² https://www.womenon20s.org/may12_poll_results_and_petition (Women on 20s, 2015)

³ Barrow, B. (2026, May 28). Treasury Secretary Bessent confirms limited steps toward a \$250 bill featuring Donald Trump. AP. <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-250-bill-c48e35fd945fe7983c7481b2fbd6416c>; 31 U.S.C. 5114.

⁴ Thomas, S.D., (2026, July 15). Bessent unveils \$1 golden coin featuring Trump image. The Hill, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5969240-scott-bessent-donald-trump-america-250-gold-coin/>; BBC, "Trump 24-karat gold coin approved by hand-picked federal panel," March 19, 2026, Sareen Habeshian, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwywxvgynr2o>.

working on new currency notes, the administration should focus on the long-standing plan to feature Harriet Tubman rather than develop a new design.

Born into slavery in Dorchester County, Maryland, Harriet Tubman escaped to freedom and then repeatedly risked her life to lead dozens of enslaved people to freedom through the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War, she served as a spy and nurse for the Union Army and became the first woman to lead an armed military expedition in U.S. history.⁵ Her courage, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to freedom embody the highest ideals of our nation, making her a fitting choice for the honor of being depicted on our currency.

Honoring Harriet Tubman on our nation's currency is an important recognition of her legacy and we urge you to reconsider. In addition, we request that you provide a detailed explanation of your comments about placing Harriet Tubman on the twenty-dollar bill, including what factors informed the decision and whether the redesign has been permanently canceled or merely delayed.

The American people and Congress deserve transparency regarding this decision, and we request a briefing no later than August 12, 2026.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



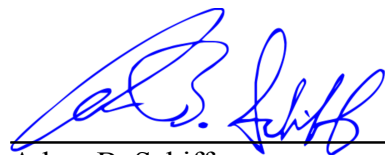
Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

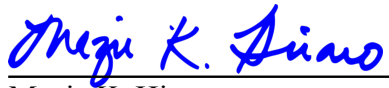
⁵ Clark, A. (2025, May 28). After the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman Led a Brazen Civil War Raid. History. <https://www.history.com/articles/harriet-tubman-combahee-ferry-raid-civil-war>



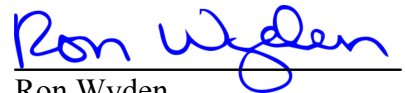
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United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
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Mazie K. Hirono
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Ron Wyden
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