

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 6, 2017

Leonard R. Olijar
Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Engraving and Printing
14th and C Streets, SW
Washington, DC 20228

Director Olijar:

Of the more than 180 countries issuing paper currency, the United States is the only country to issue paper money in congruent sizes and identical coloration for all denominations. As you know, because of this, people who are blind or visually impaired are unable to distinguish the denomination of U.S. currency without the assistance of a sighted person or technology. It is paramount that all Americans are able to engage in commerce, including the approximately 24.7 million Americans experiencing difficulty seeing, even when wearing their glasses or contacts. Accordingly, we would like to inquire into the status, cost, and timeline for implementation of tactile features on Federal Reserve Notes.

It is concerning that the United States continues to lag behind the rest of the world on this matter. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (the Bureau) must ensure as soon as possible that people who are blind or visually impaired are able to easily determine the value of currency. According to a 2014 GAO report examining the Bureau's progress towards this goal, the Bureau was behind schedule on meeting the milestone of selecting a tactile feature application method and application material, which has raised concerns that the Bureau will not meet its goal of ensuring that the \$10 note is ready for production as soon as possible.

Although the Bureau has provided currency reader devices to people who are blind or visually impaired at no cost, and has developed an application to further increase access, it is unsatisfactory that a portion of our population is forced to use electronic devices to be able to engage in commerce. Advocates have raised concerns that many people with visual impairments already carry several assistive devices, and a currency reader requires these individuals to carry yet another device. Additionally, because of the time that it takes to use a reader, the device does not allow a person who is visually impaired to identify currency as quickly as a tactile feature.

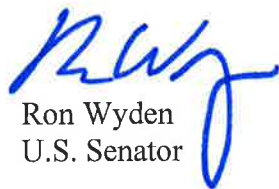
Given the importance of implementing a tactile feature on not just the \$10, but the \$5, \$20, \$50, and \$100 Federal Reserve Notes, we respectfully ask that:

1. The Bureau provide an update on steps that have been taken to have the final design concepts for the \$5, \$10, and \$20 notes ready by August 18, 2020;

2. The Bureau provide a deadline for finalizing the selection process for a tactile feature;
3. The Bureau provide a deadline for when the \$10 bill will be ready for production with a tactile feature;
4. The Bureau provide detailed information on the cause of the delay if those deadlines will not be met;
5. The Bureau provide a timeline with concrete milestones for the implementation of a tactile feature on the \$50 and \$100 notes.

We respectfully request a reply to these questions no later than July 31, 2017. We appreciate your attention to this matter.


Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator