

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND, et al.,)
)
 Plaintiffs,)
)
 v.)
)
 STEVEN T. MNUCHIN, Secretary of the)
 Treasury,)
)
 Defendant.)

Case No. 1:02-cv-00864-BAH

DEFENDANT’S NINETEENTH STATUS REPORT

Defendant, by his undersigned counsel, hereby submits this Nineteenth Status Report pursuant to paragraph 4 of the Court’s Order and Judgment of October 3, 2008 (Doc. 96), and the Court’s Order of August 15, 2012 (Doc. 121), which require the defendant to file semi-annual status reports describing the steps taken to implement the Order and Judgment.

1. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (“BEP” or “Bureau”) continues to make progress in exploring the options contained in a three-pronged approach to providing meaningful access to United States currency by (1) adding a raised tactile feature to each Federal Reserve note that the BEP may lawfully redesign, (2) distributing electronic currency readers for blind and other visually impaired U.S. citizens and legal residents, and (3) continuing the Bureau’s program of adding large, high-contrast numerals and different colors to each denomination that it may lawfully redesign.

2. BEP continues to pursue the creation of a durable, usable, and manufacturable tactile feature. The Bureau has now settled on a four-position rectangle shape for the feature as offering the best possibility of success, but the Bureau has not yet chosen between the two remaining potential methods of application (Intaglio and Coated-embossed). As explained in prior filings, the tactile feature must satisfy several criteria, each of which is required: It must

enable blind and other visually impaired persons to denominate currency effectively; it must be able to function in commerce without interfering with security features; it must be sufficiently durable to remain usable through the extensive handling of currency; and BEP's machinery must be able to produce the feature consistently in the large volumes required.

3. BEP has established a testing schedule to evaluate all of these factors using the rectangle shape and the two remaining potential application methods. Under that schedule, BEP began conducting durability testing in February, and that testing is expected to continue through April 2018. BEP also expects to conduct focus group testing to determine effectiveness and the preferences of blind and visually-impaired persons in March and April 2018. Bank equipment testing is planned for March through May 2018 to determine whether the tactile feature will function in high-speed currency processing and handling, and critical manufacturing testing is scheduled for April through August 2018 to verify manufacturability. Further large-scale testing with blind and visually-impaired persons is scheduled for July and August 2018. Final analysis of the resulting data is expected in late 2018. In 2019, BEP plans to begin a Technology Integration Phase during which it will determine how any potential tactile feature will interact with the rest of the note, including most critically the security features. By late 2019, BEP intends to make a final decision as to which potential tactile feature option is able to meet all of the criteria described above and thus can be included in the next redesign of the currency.

4. As noted in prior filings by the defendant, one step in the process of redesigning the currency is deciding in what sequence the denominations will be redesigned and issued, based primarily on counterfeiting threats. Heretofore, BEP and the Department of the Treasury have been planning on a sequence of \$10, \$5, \$20, \$50, \$100 for the next redesign, but the Secretary approved a change in that sequence on February 22, 2018. Based on an assessment of the

emerging counterfeiting threats, the Advanced Counterfeit Deterrence Steering Committee recommended changing the redesign sequence to \$10, \$50, \$20, \$5, \$100, and the Secretary accepted that recommendation. BEP and the Department still intend to have the first denomination of the redesign ready for production no later than 2026.

5. BEP continues to provide meaningful access to the currency for a large proportion of blind persons through a currency reader distribution program operated in conjunction with the National Library Service. As of March 13, 2018, the program has distributed approximately 59,860 readers.

6. As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the distribution of currency readers, BEP conducted a pilot program in February 2018 with the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (“ATAP”), a third-party organization that works with blind and visually-impaired persons, to distribute currency readers directly to ATAP’s patrons. ATAP is a national, member-based, non-profit organization, comprised of state Assistive Technology Act Programs funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §§ 3001-3007. ATAP facilitates the coordination of state Assistive Technology Programs nationally and provides technical assistance and support to its members. Additionally, BEP intends to explore conducting similar programs with other third-party organizations, such as the Lighthouses for the Blind, which have shown interest in expanding the availability of currency readers directly to their patrons.

7. BEP also continues to provide meaningful access for a large segment of the blind community through mobile device applications, which allow smartphones and similar devices to function as currency readers. The number of downloads of these applications continues to increase. The EyeNote app for Apple devices, which BEP developed, has been downloaded

approximately 52,663 times. The IDEAL Currency Identifier app for the Android operating system has been downloaded approximately 13,705 atimes.

Dated: March 16, 2018

Respectfully submitted,

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