

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

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND, et al.,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No. 1:02-cv-00864-BAH
	)	
STEVEN T. MNUCHIN, Secretary of the	)	
Treasury,	)	
	)	
Defendant.	)	
	)	

**DEFENDANT'S EIGHTEENTH STATUS REPORT**

Defendant, by his undersigned counsel, hereby submits this Eighteenth 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This Court denied a motion by the plaintiffs to modify the Court's Judgment in this action (Doc. 152), and the plaintiffs have appealed that denial to the Court of Appeals, Case No. 17-5013 (D.C. Cir.). Briefing on the appeal has been completed, and oral argument is scheduled for October 19, 2017.

2. BEP continues making significant efforts toward developing an accurate, durable, and manufacturable tactile feature for the currency. The extensive focus-group testing described in the Seventeenth Status Report (Doc. 155) occurred in March 2017. The test notes presented six different locations and styles of tactile features, in five denominating patterns, for each of the two remaining potential application methods (Intaglio and Coated-Embossing). All of the notes received simulated wear before testing, approximating the half-life of each note. There were a total of 52 individual participants from seven different organizations – specifically, the American Council of the Blind, National Industries for the Blind, the National Federation for the Blind, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, the National Library Service of the Library of Congress, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and the Washington DC VA Medical Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

3. The March 2017 testing showed significant variation in the accuracy rates among the participants. In addition to assessing accuracy, BEP asked each participant to rate his or her level of confidence in correctly identifying the notes, with “5” being the greatest level of confidence and “1” being the lowest level. BEP then determined the overall confidence level on notes denominated by each participant. The confidence ratings were somewhat low, ranging from 2.66 to 3.82, even among those participants with a relatively higher accuracy rate. Folds and creases in the notes from the simulated wear sometimes confused the participants and/or caused them to identify the denomination incorrectly. BEP is continuing to attempt to rectify the accuracy and durability concerns with tactile features.

4. 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 September 18, 2017, the program has distributed more than 55,216 readers.

5. 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 36,168 times. The IDEAL Currency Identifier app for the Android operating system has been downloaded approximately 11,700 times.

6. In addition to the above-described activities, BEP continues to follow the ongoing technological advances in the area of meaningful access. For example, Microsoft recently released "Seeing AI," a free application for Apple devices that reads documents and describes objects for blind and other visually impaired persons using a device's built-in camera. The company intends to add a currency-identification feature to this app in the near future. *See* Seeing AI, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/seeing-ai/> (last visited Sept. 18, 2017).

7. BEP described its efforts to provide meaningful access to the currency in a letter to U.S. Senators Ron Wyden, John Boozman, and Sherrod Brown dated August 1, 2017 (Attachment I hereto).

Dated: September 18, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

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