



May 3, 2016

## Harriet Tubman

Last week, U.S. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew announced major design changes to the paper currency of the United States. Among the most significant changes is the replacement of President Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with Harriet Tubman. Other bills will also have significant changes. The back of the \$5 bill will include historic events at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., with images of opera singer Marian Anderson, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the back of the \$10 bill will include five leaders of the women's suffrage movement - Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Alice Paul, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth.

But it is Harriet Tubman's inclusion on the front of one of our most used currencies that may be the most significant change. The \$20 bill is what we get when we go to our local ATMs. Only \$1 bills and \$100 bills have more bills in circulation than the \$20 bill. There hasn't been a woman in paper money for more than 100 years, and there has never been an African-American on our currency. Though some do not want Andrew Jackson removed from the \$20 bill, I think it is great that we have an opportunity to celebrate a great woman like Harriet Tubman with a place of honor on the front of the \$20 bill, with President Andrew Jackson moved to the back of the \$20 bill.

Harriet Tubman was born Araminta Ross in Maryland around 1822 and died on March 10, 1913. She was an American abolitionist, humanitarian, and an armed scout and spy for the United States Army during the American Civil War. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently made some thirteen missions to rescue approximately seventy enslaved families and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. In the post-war era was an active participant in the struggle for women's right to vote.

Here are some great quotes attributed to Harriet Tubman: "*Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.*" "*I freed a thousand slaves - I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves.*"

As Amrita Myers, an historian at Indiana University said, "Every time you pick up that \$20 bill, it's a reminder that we can't ignore or pretend like we didn't have 400 years of slavery."

Let's look forward to the redesigned \$20 in 2020 and let's celebrate the life of a great American, Harriet Tubman.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Ford".

La Shawn K. Ford  
State Representative-Eighth District