



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 16, 2019

## Trump Not Delaying Harriet Tubman \$20 Bill

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In 2016, the Obama administration announced that the \$20 bill was being redesigned to feature the likeness of Harriet Tubman and that a concept design for the bill would be released by 2020. But when Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin [told](#) a congressional committee in May that the prototype would not be ready next year, Democrats and their media allies claimed President Donald Trump was deliberately delaying it because he is a [racist](#).

There's just one problem with that assertion: It's false.

Although Trump, when running for office, disapproved of Tubman's replacing Andrew Jackson on the \$20, calling it "pure political correctness," current and former federal officials — some of them appointed by President Barack Obama — told the [Washington Post](#) that the Trump administration is doing nothing to hamper the process.

"The timeline for issuing a new \$20 note remains consistent with the prior Administration's," a Treasury Department spokesman told the paper in a statement. "As the Department and Bureau of Engraving and Printing have consistently stated, the only consideration with regard to the redesign schedule of our Nation's currency has been security and potential counterfeiting threats."

If anyone is to blame for the appearance of delay, it's Obama's Treasury Secretary Jack Lew. With the \$10 bill scheduled for redesign before the \$20, Lew wanted to replace Alexander Hamilton with Susan B. Anthony, but the popularity of the Broadway musical *Hamilton* put the kibosh on that, so instead Lew settled on swapping Tubman for Jackson. At the time, Lew said a "final concept design" for the bill would be released in 2020.

That, however, was never going to happen, and Lew should have known it. Larry Felix, director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) from 2006 to 2015, told the *Post* that the year before Lew made his announcement, he (Felix) told Treasury officials that their existing plans to release a new \$20 design in 2020 were unworkable. He also said that the Advanced Counterfeit Deterrence committee, an interagency panel governing currency redesign, issued a confidential report in 2013 stating that the new \$20 would not enter circulation until 2030. (The Trump Treasury Department says production on the new bill will begin in 2028, and the bill will be released into circulation two years later.)

"Those announcements were not grounded in reality," Felix said. "The U.S. had not at the time acquired the security features to redesign and protect the notes."



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Two other high-ranking Obama appointees, one of them still in office, told the *Post* essentially the same thing.

Furthermore, wrote the newspaper:

Felix and other senior officials believed it would not be possible to release a “concept” design of Tubman on the \$20 in 2020, given that these designs are never released several years — much less an entire decade — before they enter circulation.

The Treasury can release “concept” designs before the currency enters circulation in the economy, but it has never done so more than a year in advance, according to a spokesperson for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The spokesperson said the precaution is aimed at depriving hackers and other counterfeiters from having additional time to prepare for new denominations.

Current BEP director Len Olijar, an Obama appointee, told [CNBC](#) in a statement Monday: “Not only is it a mistake to give counterfeiters a look at potential security features, currency designs undergo a number of iterations and can change during testing. Moreover, as U.S. currency is a world currency, it is important not to confuse the public with design changes.”

“There’s a lot of misinformation on this issue,” Mnuchin said at a Monday news conference. “This is a nonpolitical situation where the primary objective of changing the currency is to stop counterfeiting.” He added that “even in the most optimistic scenario,” the redesign would not be complete until after Trump’s second term, assuming there is one.

“The suggestion that this process is being stalled is completely erroneous,” Mnuchin declared last month.

Unfortunately, in Washington, truth frequently takes a back seat to politics. Even if the *Post* report succeeds in putting the Tubman kerfuffle to rest, the Left will soon come up with [new ways](#) to paint Trump as a racist.

*Image of Harriet Tubman: Library of Congress*



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