

The original documents are located in Box C44, folder “Presidential Handwriting, 7/20/1976 (1)” of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

7.20.76

MR PRESIDENT:

TO: Jim Connor

The attached is for your information.
It will be handled in a routine manner
unless you indicate otherwise.

For Your Information: _____

For Appropriate Handling: _____

Pres. F.Y.I file.

Jim Connor

*copy
Forward to
Martin with
ac/td*

RDL
Robert D. Linder

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 20, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROLAND ELLIOTT
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
SUBJECT: Letter to Terry Martin, KMPC Radio

The attached letter from Secretary Simon of July 19 concerning the use of braille-type markings on U.S. currency was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Forward copy of Martin with ack/ltr"

Would you please prepare an appropriate Presidential letter to Mr. Terry Martin of KMPC Radio in Los Angeles, attaching a copy of Secretary Simon's letter and return it to me. Also attached, for your information, is a copy of the interview with Martin wherein the President said he would ask Secretary Simon about the matter.

cc: Dick Cheney



THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

WASHINGTON 20220

JUL 19 1976

Dear Mr. President:

This is to respond to your inquiry regarding the feasibility of using braille-type markings on U.S. currency for the convenience of the blind and near-blind. As you will recall, you were asked your views on this question on June 18 in an interview with Terry Martin of KMPC Radio, Los Angeles, California. In the course of your answer you said you would ask me about the matter.

Treasury's Bureau of Engraving and Printing has done considerable research over the years about the potential for the blind of special identification on currency, and has exchanged technical information with other nations which are also studying the problem. Its efforts have included the preparation of experimental currency from plates engraved with braille-type characteristics. Unfortunately, the results have not been encouraging.

As you noted, the National Federation of the Blind in a national convention of delegates from fifty states passed a unanimous resolution strongly opposing legislation to include braille-type markings on currency. I have attached a copy of that resolution for your current information.

The Netherlands is using raised characteristics on their paper currency in a practical experiment. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has monitored this test. In response to the Bureau's most recent inquiry, a letter from the Bank of the Netherlands in September 1975, states in part:

"We are not so very much surprised that the tests you conducted with blind persons were rather inconclusive. In our country too it showed that surely not all blind persons are able to distinguish the denominations by feeling. To those people, however, who are not quite blind but visually handicapped it

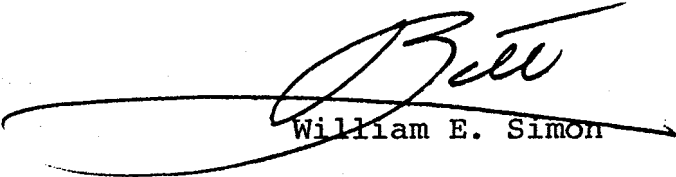
is a help and of course to a varying extent.

There is also some doubt whether in general the wear of the paper enhances or affects the palpability of the marks. It probably depends on the kind of wear and is varying with every single note.

Consideration should be given to the fact that we introduced these marks as an experiment and as such it does not seem to be a complete success. On the other hand it provided some goodwill from the public and it triggered a process of further reflection."

I have asked Mr. Conlon, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, to expand his investigation of the feasibility of braille-type markings on currency to include the evaluations of additional organizations, recommended by Mr. Martin, such as the Braille Institute. I will keep you advised of developments.

Faithfully yours,



William E. Simon

The President

The White House

Enclosure

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
RESOLUTION 71-07**

WHEREAS, Congressman Rarick of Louisiana has introduced in the House of Representatives of the 92nd Congress H.R. 9102, a bill to provide for paper money of the United States to carry a designation in Braille indicating the denomination; and

WHEREAS, the requirements of this legislative proposal would only serve to strengthen and more firmly entrench the too generally accepted stereotype of the blind person as dependent for participatory functioning upon special gimmicks and inconveniencing adjustments to the sighted; and

WHEREAS, it is the fear and concern of the National Federation of the Blind that ways soon would be found and devised to corrupt and alter Braille designations of paper money values by which blind persons would be defrauded and cheated; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming and always present problem of blind persons is not the ability to differentiate the various dollar values of paper money but the great and constant problem of blind persons is to obtain employments commensurate with their talents, training, and abilities which will enable them to earn dollars as competing and functioning members of the labor force; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 6th day of July, 1971, in the city of Houston, Texas, that this organization directs its officers to take all actions necessary, including the presentation of testimony in congressional hearings and otherwise, to defeat H.R. 9102.

Adopted unanimously.

JUNE 18, 1976

INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT

BY

TERRY MARTIN, KMPC RADIO
LOS ANGELES, CALORNIA

THE OVAL OFFICE

2:07 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Terry. I am very, very happy to welcome you here today in the White House and in fact in my private office off the Oval Office.

Before answering your questions, I would like to say just a few words about my commitment to the physically handicapped. I believe America's handicapped citizens have a right to live with self-reliance, with dignity to realize their full capacity as human beings and to achieve personal and professional fulfillment.

I recognize that the disabled, for reasons in many, many cases beyond their own control, have to be given special attention and my Administration is taking steps to do just that.

Income and health security are a very important item as far as the disabled are concerned. I, therefore, proposed in my budget for the next fiscal year that the full cost of living increase and Social Security benefits be paid in the coming year and I have submitted legislation to the Congress to provide catastrophic health insurance for everybody covered by Medicare.

Now, UMTA can -- deals with various communities around the country giving Federal money to local communities to help subsidize local transit companies should put pressure that buses or trains or subways be equipped with the most up-to-date, the most modern capability to help the disabled to use those facilities.

Now, I don't know the details about the General Motors situation, and I should not comment if I don't know the details, but, Terry, basically I agree that UMTA ought to do throughout the country what we have done with the Metro system here in Washington, D.C.

MR. MARTIN: Let me tell you something a little bit about coins and money. For many years the blind have been almost stymied in respect to making change in public places because, of course, there are people who are unscrupulous, and I know blind people have certain methods of folding their money so they will know if it is a five or a ten or a one. Would there be anything that you could do as President in respect to possibly placing Braille on number systems on American dollars and, in this way, the blind would not have to worry about being cheated when they are making change?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that for some years now the Department of the Treasury has been reviewing what could be done in the marking, so to speak, of U.S. currency so that those who are blind would be able to identify what they gave and what they received back.

Unfortunately, according to information that has been given me, there has been no practical method yet determined so there could be a differentiation as far as a blind person is concerned.

These experiments, I am told, were initiated in 1971. I am also informed -- and I must say this somewhat surprises me -- that soon after this program was begun or this research was undertaken by the Department of the Treasury, the Treasury was advised that the National Federation of the Blind opposed the Braille identification of currency.

Now, it would be helpful, if we are to proceed with that study, to get the cooperation and the support of the National Federation rather than their opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Well, let me just explain in respect to the national organization, our organization deals in communications for the deaf and the blind and the physically impaired. We have run into various difficulties with the NFB because they feel that their blindness is not a handicap, it is only an inconvenience.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, because they have a body that is relatively vocal, a lot of individuals such as the Treasury Department would listen to them. They only have 50,000 members in the country, and I don't feel that 50,000 people represent all of the blind people or the visually impaired in this country.

I speak to blind people every day, and they are a rather radical organization, and I would like to advise you, based on what I have learned from our constituency, that the Treasury continue with this because this just follows right into one of my next questions about the free fare plan offered to blind people on the bus system funded by the Federal Government, because it is a matter of fact in Los Angeles the National Federation of the Blind were going to put a petition before the Rapid Transit District Board of Directors suggesting that they discontinue the free fare plan because they didn't want to be singled out.

Well, this was horrendous in my thought that I went to one of our local councilmen and I got a letter of support from him and I went and spoke personally to the Board of Directors of the Rapid Transit District and expressed the fact to them that the NFB is a radical organization, they are not generally supported by many blind people, and that a lot of the things they want to do do not make sense in the general opinion and for the RTD to stop this free fare plan would be terrible.

I would really like to suggest that this investigation carry on again because, first of all, constitutionally none of the so-called leaders have ever been voted as leaders and, secondly, it is my understanding -- please correct me if I am wrong -- but unless an elected, appointed official appoints someone to be a spokesman or a leader, they are really not an official leader if they have not been voted into that position

or appointed by someone who has been voted into that position, so they are really an ad hoc situation, and I am very disturbed over their activities.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, I am not an expert on the National Federation of the Blind.

MR. MARTIN: Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: I wholly subscribe to what I think you are saying, that people or an organization that represent a segment of our society ought to be elected just like a Member of Congress is elected or a Governor or a President. Then you have an official status that comes from the grass roots.

I say from my experiences those organizations that have a so-called democratic process for the selection of their officers are far more effective in representing their constituency than those that are chosen by some other means.

Now, as I understand it, in Los Angeles there is a free fare bus program that does exist at the present time.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, sir, that is correct.


THE PRESIDENT: Then you raised the question, as I recall, whether the Federal Government ought to enforce or impose a free fare bus system on all of the communities throughout the United States. The present law does not require it. The question that then comes up is, should the Federal Government, as a matter of national policy, force 5,000, or whatever the number is, local communities to have such a plan as the one in Los Angeles.

I happen to be a firm believer that local decisions are really better in these kinds of problems than having the Congress dictate such a policy and, therefore, if Los Angeles wants to do it, that is their prerogative. If some other community decides that it does not want that policy for reasons that they have as far as they are concerned themselves, I think they ought to have that option or that choice, but for the Federal Government to impose such a policy I think is rather contrary to one of the basic principles that I believe in as far as our Government is concerned.

MR. MARTIN: I think our thought was not really to impose it but just to support it if the local people were in support of doing this because we would like to see physically impaired people offered the same programs such as in the same way we would like to see deaf and physically impaired persons offered the same tax deduction that is currently being offered to the blind, basically because we feel it is unfair to single out just the blind in this respect when a physical disability -- no matter what kind it is -- will cause some additional expenses, additional discomforts in that area.

THE PRESIDENT: I would agree with that.

MR. MARTIN: I just want to get one thing together again on the money situation and the NFB. I feel that if the Treasury Department wants to, we would be glad to help them in any way we could. I think the Braille Institute, which is well known, I think they would be in disagreement with that because it --

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say that I will talk to the Secretary of the Treasury, ask him what the current status is, what their plans are, and ask him why they have not continued the study if they have terminated it. 

MR. MARTIN: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, thank you. It has been a pleasure to have you here in my private office in the West Wing of the White House, adjacent, more or less, to the Oval Office. It has been nice meeting you, and I congratulate you and commend you for your vigor and enthusiasm and dedication and certainly wish you the very best.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you very much.

END (AT 2:25 P.M. EDT)