

## Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Penny Legislation Passes House, Clearing Way for Presidential Signature

To: National Circuit

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December 14, 2005 – The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation on December 13 to honor the 200th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009, by a vote of 291 to 113, clearing the way for signature by the president. The legislation will make historic redesign changes to the reverse side of the Lincoln penny, which currently depicts the Lincoln Memorial.

Senator John Sununu (R-New Hampshire) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada) sponsored the "Presidential \$1 Coin Act of 2005" (S. 1047), which includes the penny redesign provisions. S. 1047 is modeled after a bill (H.R. 902), sponsored by Representative Mike Castle (R-Delaware) and Carolyn Maloney (D-New York), that passed the House in April by a vote of 422 to 6.

S. 1047 directs the United States Mint to produce pennies in 2009 that preserve the portrait of Lincoln on the front (obverse), with four designs representing different aspects of his life on the back (reverse): his birth and early childhood in Kentucky; his formative years in Indiana; his professional life in Illinois; and his presidency in Washington, DC.

The Lincoln penny redesign initiative is combined with provisions to create a presidential \$1 coin series, similar to the Mint's widely popular 50-State Quarter Program. In addition to the presidential coins, the bill authorizes a \$10 coin burnished with images of the nation's first ladies. The programs will proceed at no cost to taxpayers.

Mark Weller, the Executive Director of Americans for Common Cents, said the passage of this bill is momentous because, "Abraham Lincoln's political and cultural significance to our nation is extraordinary." Lincoln's image has graced the coin since 1909, the 100th anniversary of his birth. Michael F. Bishop, the Executive Director of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which recommended the penny redesign, stated, "A Lincoln penny series will serve to highlight the important stages of Lincoln's life, and will delight Americans as they go about their daily transactions."

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Americans for Common Cents (<http://www.pennies.org>) is a broad-based advocacy group of business, charitable, and numismatic organizations. The group formed in 1990 in response to Congressional threats to eliminate the penny. Information about the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission can be found at <http://www.lincolnbicentennial.gov/>.