R007–0809

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING EQUALITY FOR THE BLIND

WHEREAS: The District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals found in American Council of the Blind v. Paulson that paper money discriminates against the blind in violation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and,

WHEREAS: Paper money was found to be discriminatory because it lacks features that the blind can use to distinguish between denominations; and,

WHEREAS: Most proposals to comply with this ruling call for bills to come in different sizes and shapes; and,

WHEREAS: Changes of this sort would put an undue burden on merchants, vending machine operators and other third party businesses would have to make drastic and costly changes to accommodate changes in currency designs; and,

WHEREAS: It would cost over $3.5 billion in order to retool or replace the over 7,000,000 food and beverage vending machines in the United States in order to accept different sized bills; and,

WHEREAS: One solution to bring paper money into compliance with the Circuit Court's decision is to change the security threads in American currency to make them heavier so they could be felt, and to vary the location and quantity to denote value; and,

WHEREAS: These heavy security threads would make paper money more easily distinguished by the blind, would prevent costly changes by third party businesses to accommodate changes in currency, and would add a level of security against counterfeiting.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to adding and enhancing the security threads in American paper currency to aid the blind and visually impaired.

MANDATES: Henry Paulson, Secretary of the Treasury
Anna Escobedo Cabral, Treasurer of the United States
Larry R. Felix, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing

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