

Lady, you're on the money

July 3 2015, by Faith Dawson



The U.S. Treasury has not announced which woman will appear on the new \$10 bill, but a Tulane political science professor and others have suggested Rosa Parks. Credit: Illustration by Tracey Bellina-Milazzo

So far, women whose portraits appear on U.S. money have been a party of three. Excluding commemorative currency, only Sacagawea, Susan B. Anthony and Helen Keller appear on coins in general circulation, according to the U.S. Mint.

But the next time the \$10 bill is redesigned, it will have a woman's image on it—a first for U.S. paper currency. The U.S. Treasury hasn't announced whose image will be on the bill yet, but in a recent poll Americans voted for abolitionist Harriet Tubman, with Rosa Parks as

one of the runners-up. Treasury officials say they'll review suggestions from the public, including social media messages tagged #TheNew10.

Why do we need a woman's face on our currency? After all, one 2014 survey showed that consumers use plastic for most purchases over \$5.

"It's important that the books we read, the ballots we mark, and the dollar bills we exchange reflect the diversity of the American public," says Karissa Haugeberg, Tulane assistant professor of history. "It's radically democratic to demand that the material objects that represent our government reflect the citizenry of the United States."

Haugeberg suggests legal scholar and civil rights and feminist activist Pauli Murray for the new \$10.

Sally J. Kenney, professor of political science and executive director of Newcomb College Institute, agrees that the new bill should portray a woman who has advanced social causes. "I am for Rosa Parks, who worked as an anti-rape activist in the 1940s. Few know the history of how white men's sexual abuse of black women fueled the Montgomery bus boycott."

Whoever gets the nod, the honoree may have to share space with her predecessor: Alexander Hamilton's picture may remain on the redesigned note, or the treasury may issue two versions of the \$10.

Either way, the public will have to wait to spend the new note. It won't enter circulation until 2020, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment.

Provided by Tulane University

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