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### **ACC Issue Brief: Penny Redesign Law to Honor Lincoln in 2009**

In 2005, Congress approved legislation making historic redesign changes to the reverse side of the Lincoln penny in 2009 to honor the 200th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth.

#### **Legislative History**

Senator John Sununu (R-NH) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NE) sponsored the "Presidential \$1 Coin Act of 2005" (S. 1047 — P.L. 109-145), which included the penny redesign provisions. S. 1047 was modeled after a House bill (H.R. 902), sponsored by Representatives Mike Castle (R-DE) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), which passed the House in April 2005 by a vote of 422 to 6.

#### **Penny Redesign Provisions**

The new law directs the United States Mint to produce pennies in 2009 which 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 Quarters 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, has said that the passage of this legislation was momentous because ". . . Abraham Lincoln's political and cultural significance to our nation is extraordinary." Lincoln's image has graced the coin since 1909, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. "The legislation reflects Americans' love for Lincoln and their affinity for the penny," Weller added. 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."

*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/>.*