

A Penny for Your Thoughts?

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Coins are everywhere. Most coins can be useful in everyday situations, except for the penny. Pennies are no longer useful for the economic state of the United States. All coins have some use for daily activities for most people. Quarters, Dimes, and Nickels can be used in most parking meters. These coins can be used in vending machines for products, even for quick and small purchases at the store. However, the penny is the only coin that cannot be used in any of these situations. They tend to take up space in a jar, be hoarded for their materials, or just thrown away on the ground. Pennies should be removed from the minting process and taken out of circulation.

Many countries in the world have removed their lowest denomination coin from circulation. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and even the European Union are just a few groups and countries that have done away with their lowest denomination coins. These countries were able to do this with little to no adverse effects. Among the countries that have done this, there are quite a few studies and papers that have strong merits for removing of the penny in America. The U.S. mint must produce roughly 9 billion pennies per year for use; however, when it comes to the cost of making a penny, which is worth one cent, "it costs 1.23 cents to mint one penny" (Lombra, 2007). This price is due to the value of its minerals, zinc, and copper. If the government needs to mint nine billion pennies for distribution at the cost of 1.23 cents, that is \$110,700,000. The cost to create the penny for their net value loses the government about twenty million dollars annually. "That exceeds twice the annual output of all other coins combined. Production is up in part because of hoarding, in part because more and more people are throwing them in jars or drawers and never taking them out again. There are more pennies tossed in a jar or thrown on the street than returned in circulation" (Fund, 2006). This means that pennies are not being used to facilitate the exchange of goods and services which is the entire point of currency, and if a coin is not actually doing what it is supposed to be doing it should be taken out of circulation and made obsolete.

While there are many reasons to get rid of the penny, there are those that oppose the removal of the penny. While it is always said that we are one nation, we are 51: The 50 different states and the federal government that oversees it all. While other countries have gotten rid of the penny, "I'm not sure that we would be able to pull off the same feat as smoothly in the United States. I think there would be a lot more arguments, a lot more agonizing and probably a lot more resistance" (McManus, 2013). The argument that we are a stubborn country full of people who hate change isn't far off base. You need not look further than Texas to prove this fact. They are a state that is full of proud Texans who argue how independent they are from other states and the Federal government. Along with the stubborn natures of the average American there is also all the charities to think of across the United States. "Some charities use penny drives to raise money. Children in New York City collected more than 65 million pennies last year for a total of \$655,508.54, according to organizer Common Cents." (Hagenbaugh, 2006). While to most Americans a penny is something sitting in a jar at the home, to a lot of charities they can be a lifeline of funding that abolishing the penny would sever, because of the low denomination anyone giving to these charities thinks nothing of the donation, but small amounts add up.

As it has been seen, the penny debate has fervent defenders on both sides. Though there are those that oppose the removal of the penny, it is the right thing to do for our country economically. Charities that rely on penny drives can easily run nickel drives to obtain funds. Nickels are just as plentiful as pennies and it they do not impact the everyday donor for their drives. Even being a nation of stubborn Americans cannot stop the need to remove the penny. If explained in an easy to follow and understand way, most people will realize just how taxing it is on the country to produce these coins. Depending on a person's viewpoint it can be a great boon to abolish the penny, or it will hurt far more than just keeping the copper coin. To the ones who want to get rid of the penny they see it as a wasteful item that sees the government doing its usual thing of spending far more on an item than they need to.

For the people who want or need the penny it is a lifeline of giving that may just be far more of a headache to get rid of than just keeping it as part of our country's history

In fact, The United States has already stated that they will end the production of the copper coin. "The U.S. Mint announced in early April that it will stop producing pennies beginning in 2022 and will make its last batch on April 1, 2023." (Credello, 2021). With the government's decision to end the production of the penny, our country will save 70 million dollars annually. The money saved can be used to fund our schools, infrastructure, and even be given to charities in need. It is not always easy letting go of something that has been around for over a century, but we can appreciate the copper penny for its history worth

References

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