



Highlights of [GAO-03-206](#), a report to the Senate Subcommittee on Treasury and General Government and the House Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government, Senate and House Committees on Appropriations.

Why GAO Did This Study

The designs on three of the most common U. S. coins, the penny, nickel, and dime, have remained largely unchanged for over 50 years. The 50 State Quarters Program, involving a set of recurring designs commemorating each state, has been credited with generating renewed interest in the quarter by collectors and the public. A recent redesign of the new dollar coin has also increased the public's interest in collecting the coin, but it is not widely circulating.

Concerned about the level of public interest in coins and the circulation of the dollar coin, Congress mandated a GAO review of U.S. coin design, with particular attention to increasing circulation of the dollar coin. GAO contracted with the Gallup Organization to survey a representative sample of U.S. adults to obtain public views on various coin design questions, including public preference for coin denominations, coin design features, the frequency of change in coin design, and ways to increase acceptance and use of the new dollar coin. This report also includes a summary of findings from focus groups held in four U.S. cities.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-206.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Bernard L. Ungar at 202-512-2834 or ungarb@gao.gov.

U.S. COINS

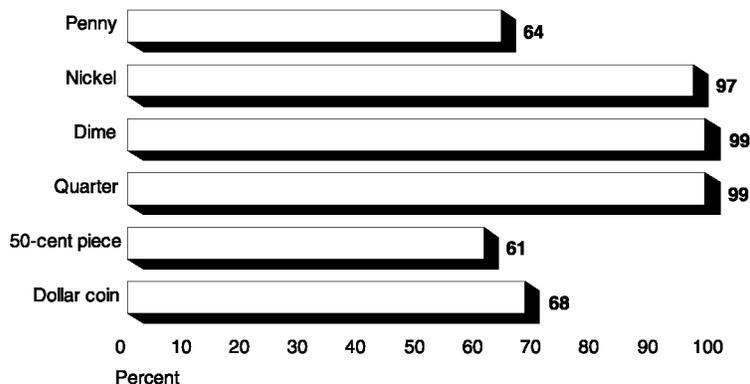
Public Views on Changing Coin Design

What GAO Found

Overall, the public is satisfied with coin denominations used, coin design features, and the frequency of changes in coin designs. Although most people are not using the new dollar coin, a program with a rotating series of images could significantly increase new dollar coin collection, but only 26 percent said it would increase new dollar coin use. The Gallup Survey indicated the following:

- Most adults in the continental United States were satisfied with current coin denominations. Over half of the respondents were opposed to the use of rounding values in cash transactions to the closest 5-cent interval to eliminate the need for the penny. Most respondents were opposed to the production of a 2-dollar coin.
- Most adults were satisfied with current coin designs. Most respondents said there is the right amount of wording on coins. Survey respondents were split on whether the actual number of cents should be shown on coins, such as including the numeral 25 on the quarter.
- Most adults were satisfied with how frequently coin designs are changed. Most respondents said the government should wait at least 10 years before changing the design on a coin, but there were some differences among age groups. Younger respondents were in favor of more frequent coin design changes, while older respondents favored less frequent changes. The survey also indicated that most people are interested in the 50 State Quarters Program.
- Most adults are not using the new dollar coin because of familiarity with the dollar bill, the coin not being widely available, and not wanting to carry around more coins. Most respondents said they were opposed to the elimination of the dollar bill to promote the coin's use, but when annual government savings of half a billion dollars were mentioned, most people then favored elimination of the dollar bill.

Responses to Survey Questions on Whether the Mint Should Continue Producing Certain Coins



Source: July/August 2002 Gallup Survey.