

Memo on Commemorative Stamp Creation

Almost all subjects chosen to appear on U.S. stamps and postal stationery are suggested by the public. Each year, Americans submit proposals to the Postal Service on thousands of subjects. Every stamp suggestion is considered by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, regardless of who makes it or how it is presented. In addition to the Postal Service's regular line of stamps, approximately 25 to 30 new subjects are recommended each year.

The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee

Established in 1957, the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) serves the Postmaster General of the United States. Using their collective expertise in history, science, technology, art, education, sports, and other areas of public interest, CSAC members consider and then recommend stamp subjects to the Postmaster General. The CSAC meets quarterly, or at the call of the chairperson, in Washington, D.C. Meetings are closed and confidential. Their next meeting date is not published online. I am in the process of utilizing my network to track down the date.

The CSAC employs no staff. The Postal Service's Stamp Development staff handles all administrative matters and correspondence for the Committee. They record and respond to as many as 40,000 letters received annually recommending stamp subjects and designs.

There are currently 12 members on the CSAC:

- **Gail Anderson:** NYC-based graphic designer, writer, and educator.
- **Peter Argentine:** Founder of Argentine Productions, Inc., a company specializing in media design and production for museums, national parks, visitor centers, science centers and television
- **B. J. Bueno:** Consultant and "branding expert"
- **Ivan Cash:** Screenwriter and art director **I have a mutual friend with Ivan**
- **Spencer Crew:** Professor of History at George Mason University
- **Dr. Cheryl R. Ganz:** Former chief curator at the Smithsonian National Postage Museum
- **Mike Harrity:** Director of student athletic development and welfare at Notre Dame
- **Janet Klug, Chair:** Philatelist (stamp expert)
- **Carolyn Lewis:** Former CEO of Texwood Furniture, Inc
- **Harry Rinker:** National expert and consultant on toys, antiques, and collectibles
- **Maruchi Santana:** Branding expert
- **Katherine C. Tobin, Ph.D.:** Professor, former member of Governors of the Post Office, Bush Jr. and Obama appointee to several high-level federal positions.

The Postmaster General

While the CSAC reviews public stamp subject suggestions and artwork created by USPS art directors and the illustrators they work with, the Postmaster General (PG) has the final say in the matter.

The PG is the chief executive officer of the United States Postal Service; Megan Brennan is the current Postmaster General (appointed by the Governors of the Post Office in 2015; this Board currently

has two Trump picks and one Obama nominee). Brennan has publicly conflicted with Trump over his demands that she double the rates they charge Amazon for deliveries.

Requirements

The USPS and the members of the CSAC have set certain basic criteria used in determining the eligibility of subjects for commemoration on all U.S. stamps and stationery:

1. U.S. postage stamps and stationery will primarily feature American or American-related subjects. Other subjects may be considered if the subject had significant impact on American history, culture or environment.
2. The Postal Service will honor extraordinary and enduring contributions to American society, history, culture or environment.
3. U.S. stamp programs are planned and developed two to three years in advance. In order to be considered, subject matter suggestions should be submitted three or more years in advance of the proposed stamp.
4. Living people will not be considered at the present time. Beginning in 2018, proposals for a deceased individual will be considered three years following his/her death.
5. A memorial stamp will be issued honoring U.S. presidents after they are deceased.
6. Events of historical significance shall be considered for commemoration on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.
7. A balance of stamp subjects that includes themes of widespread national appeal and significance will be considered for commemoration. Official postal cancellations, which may be arranged through the local postmaster, may be requested for significant local events or commemorations.
8. Commemorative postage stamps will be issued at intervals of 50 years from the date of the state's first entry into the Union.
9. The stamp program commemorates positive contributions to American life, history, culture and environment; therefore, negative occurrences and disasters will not be commemorated on U.S. postage stamps or stationery.
10. Due to the limitations placed on annual postal programs and the vast number of locales, organizations and institutions in existence, it would be difficult to single out any one of the following for commemoration: government agencies, localities, non-profit organizations, associations, and similar entities. Stamps or stationery items shall not be issued to honor religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are associated with religious undertakings or beliefs. However, these subjects may be recognized with commemorative postmarks.
11. Stamps may be issued for the five active-duty branches – Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. This includes Reserve/Guard components of the current organizational structure. Stamps for the major service academies will be considered on a case-by-case basis for 50-year anniversaries (or multiples thereof).

Submission

Any proposal that meets the established criteria will be considered. To submit a proposal, which can be by letter, post card, or petition, you must send **it in writing by U.S. mail**. No in-person appeals, phone calls, or e-mails are accepted. The proposal should include pertinent historical information and important dates associated with the subject.

After a proposal is determined not to violate the USPS criteria, each proposed subject is listed on the committee's agenda for its next meeting. Each proposal is presented without attribution and receives the same level of consideration; no credit or compensation is given for the submission of a stamp subject that is selected. Proponents are not advised if a subject has been approved until a general announcement is made to the public.

The USPS encourages the submission of stamp subjects to the committee at least three years prior to the proposed date of issuance, to allow enough time for consideration, design, and production.

If the Committee decides not to recommend a subject for issuance as a stamp, the proposal can be submitted again for reconsideration following a three-year interval.

Suggestions may be addressed to:

The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
c/o Stamp Development
U.S. Postal Service
1735 North Lynn St., Suite 5013
Arlington, VA 22209

Analysis of Subjects

To expedite its work, employees of the USPS's stamp development group analyze all stamp subject suggestions upon initial receipt. Subcommittees or staff researchers are formed on special themes such as sports, medicine, Black heritage, and performing arts. All supportive materials are presented to the committee, along with any suggestions.

Congressional Assistance

Members of Congress are often asked by constituents to support a commemorative theme or event. In doing so, a Member may choose to write the Postmaster General expressing support for a stamp proposal. This usually results in a referral to the CSAC. It is not uncommon for Members to introduce congressional resolutions encouraging the commemoration of a specific subject. However, congressional endorsement of a proposal accords it no special status in the committee's deliberations. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has discouraged members from introducing bills endorsing the issuance of new commemorative stamps.

Artwork

Once a stamp subject is approved, the Postal Service relies heavily on design coordinators for the selection of artists who will execute the designs. The CSAC will not review nor accept unsolicited artwork

relating to stamp subjects for consideration. Professional artists who wish to be considered for design assignments can contact the USPS and approved portfolios are placed in a talent file.

Previous Labor Stamps

The following labor leaders have been featured on United States postage stamps:

- César Chávez (2003)
- Samuel Gompers (1950)
- George Meany (1994)
- Frances Perkins (1980)
- A. Philip Randolph (1989)



Additionally, a stamp was issued in 1956 in honor of Labor Day. It featured a design from the mosaic mural at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington.