

First-Ever Pure Gold Coin Goes on Sale Today -- June 20, 2006

Castle's Presidential One-Dollar Coin Law created American Buffalo Gold Coin, another "money maker" for the federal government

Washington, D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today welcomed the start of sales of the American Buffalo coin, the first pure gold coin ever to be minted in the United States, which was created as part of Castle's "Presidential \$1 Coin Act". The coin, which will be nominally designated as a \$50 gold piece, is the nation's first 24-karat, pure gold (.9999% fineness) one-ounce coin, is being minted for the first time today in a ceremonial strike at the United States Mint at West Point.

"The new American Buffalo coin is a wonderful addition to the family of coins being produced by the U.S. Mint. The quality and value of this pure gold coin will be a great investment, and proof-quality versions will be a neat, if expensive, collector's item. The design of a classic animal of the American West along with an American Indian makes this coin a wonderful tribute to an important heritage in our country. Hopefully this coin will continue to help invigorate interest in coin collecting throughout the United States, along with the Presidential dollar coin program, which will begin next January," Castle said.

Castle is a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee and previously chaired the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, which has jurisdiction over the U.S. Mint. He created the popular 50 State Quarter Program, which is estimated to save the federal government as much as \$10 billion over 10 years and the Presidential Dollar Coin Program, which creates a circulating one-dollar coin program with a regularly changing design, featuring the Presidents of the United States in the order in which they served, with a new design every three months. The dollar coin program will start in 2007 and is estimated to save the federal government \$2 to 5 billion over 10 years.

Castle hopes the American Buffalo will be another "money maker" for the federal government depending on how sales of the coins progress. The revenue would be returned to the general fund of the U.S. Treasury as money that would not need to be borrowed.

The U.S. Mint will sell two versions of the coin -- one for investors and one for collectors. The cost for the bullion coin designed for investors will be based on the market price of gold, plus markups. The cost of the proof coin for collectors -- which has a finer finish, a higher quality strike and be made in limited quantities -- is set at about \$875 per proof coin. Only 300,000 proof versions will be produced. The design of the coin comes from the "Type 1" Buffalo Nickel designed by James Earle Fraser. An American bison appears on the reverse side while the "face," or obverse, bears the Fraser design of an American Indian. "Buffalo nickels" were issued by the Treasury Department from 1913-1938.