

An Exemption for Coins Has No Place in the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act

Coin Dealers Want to Change U.S. Law to Allow them to Trade in Undocumented Coins

- Certain private coin dealers are endeavoring to exempt themselves from their simple obligation under U.S. law to document that a coin left the country of origin before the date of the imposition of trade restrictions under the CPIA.
- Each of their specious arguments for undermining a key provision of US and international law is directly debunked in the attached materials, prepared jointly by the leaders in domestic and international cultural heritage law and practice and of organizations with passionate members who vote in Congressional districts nationwide, including New York.

The CPIA Is a Fundamental Pillar of Cultural Property Protection

- The Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA) reduces demand for looted and smuggled objects and safeguards cultural heritage. If there is a critical problem of pillage, it permits a source country battling the illegal trade to enter into a bilateral agreement with the U.S.
- For 30 years CPIA has been a vital weapon in our nation's fight against the illegal antiquities trade. By stopping illegally exported and undocumented objects from entering the U.S., the CPIA ensures that America will not become a haven for looted objects.

Exempting Coins Would Threaten Thirty Years of American Foreign Policy on Cultural Property

- An exemption for coins would cause major problems with cultural diplomacy, putting U.S. international relations at risk, contradicting current bilateral agreements with China, Italy, Cyprus, Greece, and Bulgaria, and breaching the obligations the U.S. undertook when it ratified with 124 other nations the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

An Exemption Would Interfere with Legitimate Commerce and Reduce Consumer Protections

- Legally exported and documented coins can move freely across the U.S. border. For a coin to enter legally, the CPIA requires only that a collector or dealer document that it left its country of origin before the date that the pertinent MOU between the U.S. and the source country went into effect.
- The requirement is low; a signed affidavit, inventory record, or auction catalog can be used to show timely export, but this protects legitimate consumers and collectors and encourages legitimate trade.

Coins are Significant Cultural Objects that Need and Deserve Protection

- Coins can have tremendous cultural significance and are invaluable to the archaeological record. When properly excavated, coins can provide detailed information about ancient trade, economy, politics, settlements, movement of peoples, topography, and other topics.
- The illegal trade in coins encourages looters armed with metal detectors to destroy archaeological sites in their search for coins to trade.