

Capitol Preservation Committee
Proponent Testimony to
House Committee on Veterans and Military
House Bill 2088
January 25, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I am Patrick Zollner, with the Kansas Historical Society, and the Chair of the Capitol Preservation Committee.

The Capitol Preservation Committee was created by the Legislature in 2010 to approve renovation proposals in all areas of the Capitol, the Capitol Visitor Center, and the Capitol grounds to ensure the historical beauty of those areas are preserved, preserve the proper decor of those areas, assure any art or artistic displays are historically accurate and have historic significance, approve the location and types of temporary displays, and oversee the reconfiguration of committee rooms within the Capitol.

The First Kansas Colored Voluntary Infantry regiment, often referenced as the “first to serve,” holds a distinctive place in Kansas and the nation’s Civil War experience. Kansas was the first northern state to recruit, train, and send Black soldiers into combat during the war between the states. According to the Assistant Director for Research, Kansas Legislative Research Department, the Legislature first passed legislation in 2000 authorizing two state agencies to develop plans to place a mural in the Statehouse that honors the regiment and submit those plans to the Joint Committee on Arts and Cultural Resources (SB 660; codified at KSA 75-2264). In the Joint Committee’s report to the 2002 Legislature, it recommended the completion of the mural be delayed until after Capitol Restoration. Later legislation in 2013 eliminated that committee and did not establish a successor committee to oversee or receive such plans. In the 2018, 2019, and 2021 interim, the Capitol Preservation Committee supported legislation regarding the mural including its financing and installation; legislation was introduced during the 2022 Legislative Session (SB 468, HB 2660), but those measures died in committee. The Capitol Preservation Committee determined that the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural process would provide an example and guidance for this project.

In short, this will allow a project that was started over twenty years ago to finally be completed.

I am happy to answer any of your questions.

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