

January 23, 2024

Re: House Bill 2208

Dear Member of the Federal & State Affairs Committee of the Kansas House of Representatives:

We have recently been informed that House Bill 2208 is an effort to create Legislation to convey the Shawnee Indian Mission from the State of Kansas to the Shawnee Indian Tribe under the direction of Chief Barnes from Oklahoma. As concerned residents of Kansas and residents of Fairway, Kansas, it comes as a shock that the State of Kansas would convey this property founded in such rich history.

The Shawnee Indian Mission has been an integral part of our lives and children's lives since 1984. This National Historic Landmark is a foundational historic site to all Kansans where the first Statehood vote took place and the site of our earliest Capitol.

All citizens of Kansas have a strong connection to this land and certainly a compelling interest to maintain its significant 180-year historical importance.

The Shawnee Indian Mission, once voluntary school that included students from 23 tribes, not exclusively the Shawnee tribe. The Mission is an integral part of our community, serving historical education for all Kansans. WE have attended numerous community events at the Mission over the last 40 years.

The Mission abuts two schools, Bishop Miega High School and St. Agnes Catholic Grade School, as well as St. Agnes Catholic Church. Conveying the Mission to a sovereign nation raises numerous concerns about the future of the property so important to immediate community, as well as to all Kansans. Transferring the Mission to the Shawnee Tribe would allow the State property to be used solely as Chief Barnes determines, clearly jeopardizing the future of the State's most significant historical landmark.

The continued public ownership of the Mission ensures all people have a voice in its continued use and existence. The responsibility to maintain the Mission has been entrusted to all citizens of Kansas, especially this committee. To uphold your pledge to serve Kansas, please oppose the advancement of this bill out of your committee.

Very truly yours,

By /s/Daniel F. Church
DANIEL F. CHURCH

DFC/brs