



Wyandot Nation of Kansas

P.O Box 171755 Kansas City, Kansas 66117

January 22, 2024

Re: Kansas House Bill 2208

To the esteemed Representatives and Senators of the State of Kansas,

Let it be known, it is with much thought and discussion, we write this letter regarding House Bill 2208 with the permission of the Executive Council of the Wyandot Nation of Kansas, and we acknowledge and respect our brothers and sisters the Shawnee.

The Wyandot Nation of Kansas has had an uninterrupted presence in Kansas since 1843 after settling in what is now known as Kansas City, Kansas. We are a member of the Wendat Confederacy, along with the Wyandotte Nation in Oklahoma, the Wyandotte Nation of Anderdon and the Huron Wendat of Wendake. As one of the 22 tribes represented at the school, there were 65 Wyandot children who attended the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor School: ancestors of our Wyandot tribal members today.

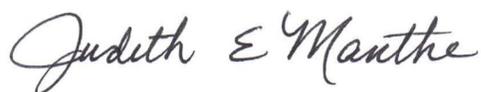
Our Nation has been active in this community for 181 years, living our culture and ceremony, as well as teaching and preserving our history. As part of that history, we have been involved with the Shawnee Indian Mission through participation in festivals and events for many years.

Since the beginning, the Shawnee Indian Mission have had many stewards and owners. The Mission was originally built on Kaw land near Turner, Kansas, before the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Due to flood and disease, the Mission was moved to the present site near Westport. It was a manual training school whose families chose to send their children there for formal

education and to learn a trade. To be clear It was not a forced residential boarding school modeled after the Carlisle Residential School like Haskell.

When the school closed 1862 it served as a Union Soldiers encampment during the Battle of Westport until 1864, the second capital of the Kansas Territory and a trail head to the West. It was under private ownership until 1927 when the Kansas State Historical Society purchased it. It has continued to protect the history and educate the public on its long-storied history. We say this not as a history lesson, but as a reminder that native tribes and private individuals have owned this land, and the entire narrative needs to be kept intact. Do you convey to the Shawnee or leave it in the hands of those that have preserved and provided education of its history for 97 years?

As an alternative resolution to house bill 2208, we encourage the Kansas legislature to continue to work with the Kansas State Historical Society to secure necessary funding needed for repairs and continued maintenance to preserve and protect this jewel of Kansas. History needs to be told, from the early native nations of Kansas, the story of the Shawnee, as well as the Civil War history and beyond.



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