

Steven Owens
8619 Reinhardt Lane
Leawood, KS 66206

To: Members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee

January 23, 2024

Dear Representatives,

I write to provide testimony regarding House Bill 2208 entitled Conveying Ownership of the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site to the Shawnee Tribe. I am a life-long Kansan and have been a Johnson County resident since 1981.

I have a great interest in the history of the Kansas City region, particularly the very important events that took place here in the mid-19th century. I have grade school age grandchildren growing up in the Shawnee Mission area and they are beginning to share my enthusiasm for the rich and complicated history of this place we call home.

I have accompanied my 6 and 10 year old grandchildren to the State Historic Site and we've spent time talking about what happened there. My wife has volunteered in the upkeep of the gardens on the site and supported fund-raising events there.

I oppose conveyance to the Shawnee Tribe because I believe that the best way to preserve history and educate future generations is through a State Historic Site. I acknowledge that our spoken and written history regarding the role of First Americans in the history of this site has been woefully neglected. I firmly believe that the best way to honor and learn about all the Tribes impacted by the Mission is for the site to remain in the public domain.

Sincerely,

Steven Owens