

JOSEPH RUPNICK, CHAIRMAN
PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION

NEUTRAL

TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

HB 2384

Chair Kessler, Vice Chair Schmoe, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. My name is Joseph Rupnick and I serve as the Chairman of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. I am a veteran of the United States Calvary and I represent approximately 4,500 Potawatomi people living mostly on our reservation within the borders of Kansas as defined by our 1846 Treaty with the United States government.

I am honored to submit to you my neutral testimony regarding HB 2384. The four resident Tribes in Kansas believe it is important that the ownership of the Shawnee Indian Mission Historic Site, and control of operations at the site, be placed with a federally recognized Indian Tribe. Regardless of which Tribe takes ownership and control, the four resident Tribes also believe it is important that they be consulted on key decisions going forward. In support of this principle, leadership of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska have passed a joint resolution supporting legislation very similar to HB 2384. That resolution and the proposed legislative language is attached to this testimony. Our understanding is that the Shawnee Tribe is agreeable to that proposed language.

The only reason I do not appear before you today as a proponent is that HB 2384 differs from the legislation supported by the Nation and the other resident tribes in two key respects. First, on page 2, line 4 of HB 2384, we prefer that the phrase “described in K.S.A. 22-2401a(j)(5)” be inserted after the phrase “four federally recognized tribes.” This language is necessary to make clear that the right to consultation specifically refers to the four resident Tribes in Kansas.

Next, we prefer that the phrase “and representation of the stories of the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor School” be inserted on page 2, line 7 at the end of the sentence. This language is necessary so that the required scope of consultation with the four resident Tribes applies to future decisions regarding content and depictions of history in addition to decisions pertaining to rehabilitation of the property.

These two provisions are reflected in the attached resolution of the four resident Tribes. I respectfully request that they be included amendments to HB 2384 when the Committee works HB 2384.

I am happy to stand for questions. Also, Committee members may contact me through the Nation’s legislative counsel, Brad Smoot.

RESOLUTION OF THE FOUR TRIBES IN KANSAS
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska
Kickapoo Tribe of Indians of the Kickapoo Reservation in Kansas
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska

RESOLUTION No. 2025-003

A Joint Resolution Supporting the Introduction of Legislation Authorizing the State Historical Society to Convey Certain Real Property located in Johnson County to the Shawnee Tribe

WHEREAS: Each of the four abovenamed Indian Tribes in Kansas (the “Four Tribes”) are federally recognized and sovereign Indian Tribes and maintain a government to government relationship with the United States; and

WHEREAS: The Four Tribes are each organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat.984) as amended by the Act of June 15, 1935 (49 Stat.378); and

WHEREAS: The four federally recognized Tribes of Kansas met on January 29, 2025 to discuss and approve the Four Tribes’ support for the introduction of legislation in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A authorizing the State Historical Society to Convey Certain Real Property located in Johnson County to the Shawnee Tribe on the terms and conditions stated in Exhibit A; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Four Tribes having reservations in the State of Kansas do hereby approve a joint resolution supporting the introduction of legislation in the Kansas Legislature, in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, which would authorize the State Historical Society to Convey Certain Real Property located in Johnson County to the Shawnee Tribe.

CERTIFICATION

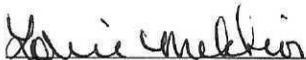
The foregoing Four Tribes Resolution was considered at their meeting on the 29th day of January 2025, at which all of them were present, and it has been duly approved by an authorized representative of each of the Four Kansas Tribes.

Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska

Kickapoo Tribe of Indians of the
Kickapoo Reservation in Kansas


Timothy Rhodd, Chairman


Gail Cheatham, Chairperson

Attest: 

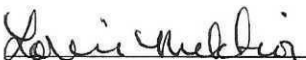
Attest: 

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

Sac and Fox Nation
of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska


Joseph "Zeke" Rupnick, Chairman


Tiauna Carnes, Chairperson

Attest: 

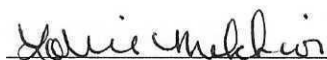
Attest: 

EXHIBIT A

AN ACT concerning the disposition of certain state real property; authorizing the state historical society to convey certain real property located in Johnson county to the Shawnee Tribe; imposing certain conditions; prescribing costs of conveyance.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. (a) Subject to the provisions of this section, the state historical society, for and on behalf of the state of Kansas, shall convey to the Shawnee Tribe all of the rights, title and interest in the following described real estate, and any improvements thereon, located in Johnson county, Kansas, containing 11.97 acres more or less:

A part of the Southwest quarter of Section 3 Township 12 Range 25, Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southwest 1/4, then North 475.4 feet then East 472.85 feet, then Southeasterly 1024.37 feet, the West 548.27 feet, then North 545.5 feet to the point of beginning, approximately 11.97 acres.

(b) Conveyance of such rights, title and interest in such real estate, and any improvements thereon, shall be executed in the name of the state historical society by the executive director of the state historical society by quitclaim deed without the necessity of appraisal, bid or publication and shall not be subject to the provisions of K.S.A. 75-3043a, and amendments thereto. No exchange and conveyance of real estate, and any improvements thereon, as authorized by this section shall be made by the executive director until the deeds and conveyances have been reviewed and approved by the attorney general. Such deeds and conveyances shall contain restrictive covenants prohibiting any gaming or gambling activities in and on the land and improvements described in subsection (a).

(c) The Shawnee Tribe agrees to pay all costs related to the conveyance and shall grant the state a historic preservation easement that will reflect current federal preservation laws regarding properties listed as national historic landmarks. The Shawnee Tribe further agrees that such land described in subsection (a) and any land adjacent to or near such land shall not be used as a casino or other gaming facility.

(d) The Shawnee Tribe will engage in formal consultation with the four federally recognized tribes described in K.S.A. 22-2401a(j)(5) and any other federally recognized tribe that had children that attended the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor School concerning rehabilitation of the land and structures described in subsection (a) and representation of the stories of the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor School.

(e) The Shawnee Tribe shall provide an update on its work to rehabilitate and manage the property described in subsection (a) and its consultation efforts every two years for ten years to the joint committee on state-tribal relations.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.