

February 25th, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Hannah Howard

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HB 2384

Proponent

Written Only

Dear Chairman & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to ask you to vote in SUPPORT of HB 2384

Thank you for taking time to hear my thoughts on HB 2384. My name is Hannah Howard. I am a Kansas resident who works for Camp Fire National Headquarters, a national youth serving organization focused on connecting youth to their communities. I am testifying in favor of HB 2384. I went to school at Bishop Miege High School, and every day, I would pass the Shawnee Indian Mission's property. But I never knew the story behind it or why it was there. And the Mission never partnered with my school for any activities or education.

The history of the Shawnee Indian Mission is closely connected to the history of the Shawnee Tribe. It was the families and children of the Shawnee who were affected by the Mission, and it was named in their honor. However, the current management of the site has not fully explored the experiences of the Indigenous children who attended the school, as they have not consulted with the tribes whose children were enrolled. There is limited understanding of how these children felt about their time at the Mission or how it impacted them and their families. We would greatly benefit from hearing more directly from their perspective.

What has been made clear through the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative by the United States Government is a national goal of addressing the intergenerational impact of board schools and shedding light on the effects they had on Indigenous communities. To convey the historical significance of the Shawnee Indian Mission, it is essential that the Shawnee Tribe takes the lead, consulting with the four federally recognized tribes whose children attended the school to ensure the full history is shared. These tribes should have the responsibility to care for the land their children once walked on and to share the stories of the Shawnee Indian Mission with future generations.

I also believe the Shawnee Tribe will improve upon the maintenance of the Mission, which currently is deteriorating and in need of property repairs. It needs restoration, particularly in the West Building, so the community can fully benefit from this historic treasure.

Please vote YES on HB 2384.

Sincerely,

Hannah Howard



Merriam, KS