



Lighting Freedom's Pathway: Building Heritage Culture

**PO Box 2201
Topeka, Kansas 66601**

March 12, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. In my capacity as chairman of the Landmark Preservations Committee of the Shawnee County Historical Society, I appear in opposition to the enactment of HB 2118, which would remove environs review of proposed changes within 500 feet of properties listed on the Historic Registry of both the state of Kansas and the US Department of Interior's Registry of historic places.

Simply stated eliminating the review by the State Historic Preservation Officer would

- Jeopardize the investment of historic property owners who expect the environs of their property to reflect the character of the neighborhood which makes their property historic.
- Subvert the investment of the state in awarding tax credits for developing historic properties into viable entities.
- Signal disdain for the rich heritage that exists throughout Kansas and reflected in historic preservation initiatives.
- Ignores the economic development significance of heritage tourism that is drawn to our state and communities because of their commitment to historic preservation.

Members of the committee will readily understand that our communities and neighborhoods are living organisms and that change is vital to their welfare. The 500 foot review does not prevent change, only assures that it is conducive to the core values of the community, which includes devotees of historic preservation.

Bill Wagon, Chairman, Landmark Preservation Committee, Shawnee County Historical Society