

1/22/24

Honorable House Federal and State Affairs Committee Members:

I urge you to deny the request to convey the Shawnee Indian Mission from the State of Kansas to the petitioning Shawnee Tribe. The site is a vital Kansas State Historic Site and the only National Historic Landmark in Johnson County.

Giving it away to the petitioner will deprive Kansans of valuable educational opportunities for generations to come. The site currently presents a fact-based education about the 22 tribes who sent children to the school, those who inhabited the land before the Shawnee arrived, as well as perspective on the beginning of Kansas Statehood, Bleeding Kansas, the Trails West and the Civil War. The petitioner has neglected its Shawnee Cultural Center property demonstrating a lack of commitment to its own tribal history and culture, much less any interest in presenting a balanced view for all parties concerned.

Additionally, the public might lose access to the site altogether. Chief Barnes and the Shawnee Tribe today cannot commit or guarantee what tribal leaders, now or in the future, will decide what to do with the land if it is conveyed to them. Case law is clear. There are pathways for the Shawnee Tribe to attempt to immediately or in the future claim the land as sovereign. In doing so, both the State of Kansas and the City of Fairway could lose jurisdictional authority over how the land is used. The prospect of unbridled development rights is daunting.

Thank you for considering my position on this matter.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Temme". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Temme
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Fairway, KS 66205