

To: The Capitol Preservation Committee

Re: Brown v. Board of Education Mural

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have reviewed the request for proposals for the Brown v. Board of Education mural, the proposals by the finalists, and consulted both historians and art faculty about the proposed depictions of our history.

The Capitol Preservation Committee specified that: "The mural will memorialize the landmark significance of Oliver Brown, et. al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka, et al. by capturing its antecedents, elements and effects on Kansas, the United States, and the international community. It will be historically accurate."

As a native of New York State, I was surprised that the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that "separate but equal is not equal" was based on a case in Kansas, given the Free State history of the State. Accordingly, I studied the issue and case in my history and political science (especially Constitutional Law) classes, and read accounts from the newspapers nationally and Kansas.

The charge to prospective artists captured my imagination because of the wealth of opportunities sought by "capturing the antecedents,...effects on Kansas, the United States, and the international community" and "be historically accurate."

The professional historians and art scholars with whom I consulted reviewed the Capitol Preservation Committee's charge and the draft work proposed by the finalists at my request. The consensus of opinion is that two of the four finalists do not capture the intent of the Committee, nor our history. Specifically, designs #2 and #6 do not capture the richness and fullness of our antecedent history and the decision's impact on Kansas, the United States, and persons around the world.

Capitol Preservation Committee

Date: 11-29-16

Attachment: 15

I encourage you to fully consider how the finalists capture both the Committee's published intent, the historical importance depicted, and the impact the mural will have on future generations who visit the Capitol.

Thank you for considering my thoughts and those of the professionals with whom I consulted.

Sincerely,

Tom
Tom Sloan
45th District Representative