



House Vision 2020 Committee
Hon. Larry Campbell

House Bill No. 2655
February 15, 2016

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

This correspondence is to convey my support of HB2655 to commemorate the initial cornerstone laid at the Kansas Statehouse by Kansas Masons in 1866.

The Masonic order having firmly established itself by 1856 preceded the formalization of the State of Kansas by 5 years, indeed many Masons of the day had a contributing hand in its formation and the later development and construction of the Kansas State Capitol Building. The Masons of Kansas were requested to set the cornerstone on October 17th 1866, which as it turned out has had quite a history itself.

The original stone, as well as other building material, was of substandard quality for such a building that would last 150 years. It soon succumbed to the elements and had to be replaced. Inside that stone was a time capsule that contained many items of interest of the day, many of which were so deteriorated in that short amount of time they were simply thrown away. The cornerstone was replaced with a quality stone that would last many, many years, and a second time capsule place within it, although the contents remain a bit of a mystery, it would have undoubtedly held many items relative to the time in which it was deposited.

In 1950 when the building underwent a renovation, the stone and time capsule were again discovered; the contents of the capsule were examined and replaced in the stone for future Kansans to discover, according to the records of the Grand Lodge of Kansas and a plaque was to be set to commemorate the occasion.

During the most recent renovation period the Bronze plaque that commemorated the occasion and marked the cornerstone was found missing, and for a while we were unsure exactly which stone was the actual cornerstone. Although Masonic principals clearly define which stone should be the cornerstone, we could find no indication that was the case, and feared that the stone may be missing as well as the plaque.

Todd Renyer of Treanor Architects produced a photo of a bronze plaque on the cornerstone, prior to the recent renovation commencing. Upon further investigation we are confident that the cornerstone remains in place and was undisturbed throughout the most recent renovation period, which also indicates that the time capsule likely remains undisturbed and intact as well.



I urge your support of this bill because of the historical significance and documentation that we have uncovered about the historical plight of the Kansas State House Cornerstone set by the Freemasons all those years ago. The Masons of Kansas are committed to, and will support, any of the costs associated with the design, manufacturing, setting and maintaining a monument.

I mentioned earlier that we had found a picture of the bronze plaque that used to mark the cornerstone. However, to date, no one has been able to locate it, it was removed during the renovation and we fear that the plaque may be gone forever, and with it a part of our Kansas history is in jeopardy of being lost as well. The setting of a new monument would indeed capture the history of not only the cornerstone and time capsule, but would give further testimony to our posterity of the significance of the ceremonies, traditions and good deeds of all men, encouraging them to be builders, and underscore the need of symmetry and order, which is essential in the building of stone structures, and also in the building of societies!

I humbly ask for your support in passing HB2655

Sincerely,

Tracy L. Bloom, P.G.M.
Grand Secretary

M.:W.: Grand Lodge of A.F. & A. M. of Kansas