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I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon in regards to House bills 2118 and 2089. I can tell you first hand that our architectural heritage is in peril, particularly in rural communities, and these two laws presently call for a review process that contributes to saving that heritage.

My name is Bill Morris; I am an architect from Augusta, Kansas. I have been in practice for over 30 years and have been on both sides of these issues, working on projects that were within 500 feet of the environs of a historic structure which required review of my project, and also as a preservation architect working on more than 60 historic projects throughout the state.

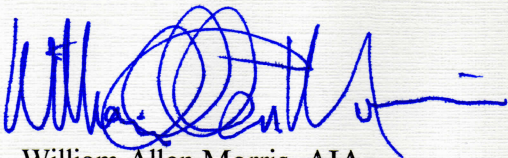
I am here today to speak in opposition to the proposed bills. The present laws are working; they are not a hindrance to economic development or revitalization of our downtown communities; they have, in fact, supported them. They have provided a measure of control and an opportunity to review projects that affect our architectural heritage.

In my experience, House Bill 2118 would dilute the protection for a historic property by endangering its environment. There are times when there is a bigger story to tell than the property itself. I have yet to see where the review at the state level has had a negative impact on a project. Sometimes there is a greater good than may be perceived at the local level. These decisions should be kept at the state level with the historic preservation professionals.

House Bill 2089 would allow local review of historic projects. I have found that local politics can get in the way of good sound decisions and these reviews need to be kept at the more objective state level. Decisions made at the local level can negatively impact economic development and property values.

As an architect dealing with reviews at the state level, I know the decisions are consistent and I know what to expect. Dealing with many different local level jurisdictions would be a professional nightmare and could develop a very uneven approach to historic preservation, depending on which part of the state a project is in.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear. I'm sure we all want the generations to come to have the same opportunity to experience our history, our architectural heritage, and the economic benefits that we have enjoyed.



William Allen Morris, AIA
Architect