



Proponent In-Person Testimony
SB 405
House Federal and State Affairs Committee
March 14, 2022

Chairman Barker, Vice Chairwoman Arnberger, Ranking Member Ruiz, Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 405, authorizing the state historical society to convey the Shawnee Indian Cemetery, located in Shawnee, KS, to the Shawnee Tribe.

The Shawnee Indian Cemetery is located just east of 59th Terrace and Nieman Road, in the heart of House District 18.

The city of Shawnee and the Shawnee Tribe's share much important history. The burial ground was in use long before the founding of the town of Shawnee. The first known burial was of a 6-year-old daughter of Joseph and Catherine Parks in 1837. The cemetery includes burial sites of Shawnee tribal leaders, including Chief Joseph Parks and Moses Silverheels, along with the second wife and children of Chief Charles Bluejacket.

Last year I toured the cemetery with Chief Barnes and representatives of the Shawnee Tribe. We walked among the gravesites, and I looked on as the Chief paid respects to gravesites labeled "Silverheels", his direct ancestors.

Transfer of the cemetery to the Tribe will help to ensure continued preservation of our shared history: The tribes that were here before us, the present-day Shawnee community, and the State of Kansas.

HB 405 returns ownership of the cemetery to its rightful people. I urge your support.

Thank you,

Representative Cindy Neighbor