

I am communicating with you at the direction of Mr. Paul Bahnmaier of the Lecompton Historical Society with regards to testifying in favor and support of Senate Bill No. 514 (SB514) on Thursday 3 March 2022 at 9:30 AM in Room 548.

My statement to be delivered at that time is as follows:

I speak this morning in support of the passage of Senate Bill No. 514, “An Act concerning income taxation; establishing a checkoff for contributions to the Kansas historic site fund.”

For more than a decade I have been privileged to work with some of the people you see here today in presenting the story of Lecompton in the history of Kansas Territory. For more than a quarter century I have researched, written about and portrayed one of the antebellum American statesmen who was key to the long neglected and critical story of “The Lecompton Swindle” one of the contemporary media condemnations of the document drafted in Constitution Hall, the now Kansas Historical Society Site that stands on Elmore Street in Lecompton.

This legislation will provide more financial support for the Constitution Hall historic site to enhance the interpretation of the critical event that occurred there in the autumn of 1857. The late Professor Robert Johannsen, who taught history at the Universities of Kansas and Illinois, wrote of this event that transpired on the second floor of Constitution Hall:

“The Lecompton Constitutional Convention, was not only the most controversial incident in the Kansas struggle but it was one of the most significant developments in the sectional conflict between the North and the South.”

That event resulted in the name of that dusty little town and its associated event being mentioned in 1858 newspapers from Australia and Honolulu in the then Sandwich Islands, across America and Europe.

It is a difficult story that has no heroes, but needs remembrance as one of the key political blunders that took America down the road to civil war. The good people who live there and work to both preserve and present that story deserve the contribution that will be made with the passage of Senate Bill No. 514, “An Act concerning income taxation; establishing a checkoff for contributions to the Kansas historic site fund.”

Kevin

Major (Retired) T. Kevin Griffin, MA