



**Jan 30, 2023**

TO THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE:

As Executive Director at the Gordon Parks Museum, I am honored and excited to express our full support and endorsement of the Grow Kansas Films Incentive Bill. This very important Film Incentive Bill, is essential and aimed at bringing in, major film productions into the state that will help to not only incentivize filming production throughout Kansas, but to help create and sustain job opportunities. This Bill will also allow our state to be competitive with other states for film production opportunities, that will increase revenue along with creating marketing and tourism opportunities to our great state.

The Gordon Parks Museum celebrates the life and work of Gordon Parks, internationally known photographer, filmmaker, writer and musician. The museum also supports filmmakers and the film industry.

The fall of 1968 in Fort Scott, Kansas marked a historical time. This was when the first major Hollywood motion picture was directed by a black film director, Kansas' native son, Gordon Parks. The film, *The Learning Tree*, was released in 1969.

This historical movie was filmed in Kansas and was placed in the Library of Congress National Film Registry Classics as one of the top twenty-five important films and continues to be very important today. The film was produced by Warner Brothers - Seven Arts Studios in Hollywood. Over 100 people from Fort Scott and Mound City, KS were a part of the film as extras, with some having speaking roles in the film. Before the filming started, "Gordon Parks Day" was held in Fort Scott, KS, on October 6, 1968. During the ceremony, Kansas Governor, Robert Docking issued a proclamation declaring "October Movie Month in Kansas" in honor of Gordon Parks.

This Bill also offers opportunities to not only incentivize major national film productions, but will incentivize local production and grow local resources as well. The Gordon Parks Museum fully supports the endeavors of the Grow Kansas Coalition and we are also very proud to be part of this Coalition and the film incentive program. This program will truly help Kansas Grow!

Sincerely yours,  
*Kirk Sharp*

Kirk Sharp, Executive Director  
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