

# THE CROSSING LEGACY FOUNDATION—Position Statement

## Elected Officials Have Kept Us In The Dark For The Last Three Years About Washington Crossing Historic Park, And Now They Are Beginning To Dismantle The Park

### Why every American should be opposed to and outraged by Pennsylvania House Bill 2126

#### REASONS

- Pennsylvania House Bill 2126 (H.R. 2126) **gives away in deed 137.5 acres (27%)** of Washington Crossing Historic Park, **where George Washington fought for our independence**, to a Private non-profit group—the Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve Association, Inc. (BHWP) for the grossly inadequate and legally insufficient consideration of **\$1.00**.
- Deeds can be broken easily. State leases guarantee that the property will remain in state possession. An example of a **deed gone bad** is the church in Washington Crossing that was built on **donated land in 1888 and forever deeded to be a church. Today it is an office building.**
- H.R. 2126 sets a precedent that will open the door for additional groups to turn existing lease arrangements into deeds; there are already many groups clamoring to take additional parts of park land (this is the privatization of the park). We must collectively act to protect and preserve Washington Crossing Historic Park, and ensure that the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) manages and **preserves the entire park’s historic integrity and appropriate use.**
- The **reverter clause in this deed is meaningless** because it allows the organization (the BHWP) or its successor complete autonomy to build any structure permitted by the local township code. This would be impossible if the land remained under the auspices of the PHMC as a **short-term lease** or agreement.

#### ISSUES

- **Land to form this Park was purchased by the residents** of Pennsylvania beginning in 1917.
- Each parcel of Washington Crossing Historic Park **represents a different event of the turning point of the Revolution** that occurred here.
- Although the staff of the BHWP competently maintain and interpret the plants and flora within the wildflower preserve, they do not have the competency to preserve and interpret the history of **Washington Crossing Historic Park—a landmark in the foundation of our great nation.**
- We **do not oppose** the BHWP, but we **do oppose permanently selling** a part of the Washington Crossing Historic Park with a very weak reverter clause in H.R. 2126.

#### GOALS

- **To protect and preserve the historic integrity of all 500 acres** of Washington Crossing Historic Park.
- To create a non-partisan, non-political **governing oversight board of 7 individuals** consisting of historic society members at a state and local level, historians, neighbors of the park, and an independent auditor.
- To **monitor the financial arrangements** of all organizations using the park land, including the wildflower preserve, and ensure that the organizations are paying for the use of the land, with that **money reinvested in the maintenance, upkeep, and historic interpretation of the Park.**
- To **keep the public informed** of agreements that the PHMC enters into regarding the Park.

#### ACTIONS—What You, Your Family, Your Neighbors, And Friends Can Do

- **Sign** the online petition: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/petition/110282042> or **sign** the hard copy petition.
- **Contact** daily all Pennsylvania state representatives, Pennsylvania state senators, and Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell, and tell them to **vote “NO” on House Bill 2126:**

1. Bernie O’Neill (Republican) – State Representative, District 29 – Sponsor of Bill 2126  
Telephone (215) 441-2624; e-mail: [boneill@pahousegop.com](mailto:boneill@pahousegop.com)
2. Scott Petri (Republican) State Representative, District 178  
Telephone (215) 364-3414; Home Page with contact link: <http://www.reppetri.com>
3. Steven J. Santarsiero (Democrat) State Representative, District 31  
Telephone (215) 968-3975; e-mail: [RepSantarsiero@pahouse.net](mailto:RepSantarsiero@pahouse.net)
4. Paul I. Clymer (Republican) – State Representative, District 145  
Telephone (215) 257-0279; e-mail: [pcllymer@pahousegop.com](mailto:pcllymer@pahousegop.com)
5. Charles T. McIlhinney Jr. (Republican) –State Senator, District 10  
Telephone (215) 489-5000; e-mail: [cmcilhinney@pasen.gov](mailto:cmcilhinney@pasen.gov)
6. Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell  
Telephone : (717) 787-2500; Home Page with contact link:  
<http://www.governor.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/contact/2998>