



JoCasta Zamarripa

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

March 31, 2015

Testimony on Assembly Bill 83

Mr. Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for scheduling a public hearing today on Assembly Bill 83 which would allow for the erection of highway directional signage on Interstate 94 for the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee County. The Basilica is a beautiful church located on Milwaukee's near south side in my assembly district and has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is truly an architectural gem, and perhaps the crown jewel of my district. If you haven't had the opportunity to stop by the basilica, I would highly encourage it next time you are in Milwaukee.

AB 83 is a straight-forward bill that would direct the state's Department of Transportation to erect and maintain highway signage noting the exit to take from I-94 to arrive at the basilica. It is important to note that these signs would only be erected upon the raising of adequate funds by private parties and would require no state funds be spent in the erection of these signs.

Susan Rabe, President and CEO of the St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation was the first person to reach out to my office regarding this matter. Susan is in attendance today and will be giving testimony that can provide further information about the basilica, its historic significance, and the foundation's plan to raise adequate private funds for the erection of this signage.

Thank you again to the committee members and the committee chair for scheduling today's hearing on AB 83. I'm hopeful that this bill can move through the legislative process with bipartisan support and arrive on the governor's desk for his signature. I'd be happy to answer any questions from committee members regarding the bill at this point.

8TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



ST. JOSAPHAT BASILICA FOUNDATION



*To Restore and
Preserve Our Heritage*

March 31, 2015

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Executive Assistant

Representative JoCasta Zamarripa
And all members of the Assembly Transportation Committee

RE: Assembly Bill 83

Greetings!

The Basilica stands alone. The year was 1896. Polish immigrants were pouring into the south side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The neighborhood swelled. Parishioners numbered more than 12,000. Rev. Wilhelm Grutza had a vision – build a grand church, one the community would be proud of, would honor their Polish heritage and be a destination for people from around the world.

Rising more than 250 feet above W. Lincoln Avenue in Milwaukee's historic Lincoln Village, it is one of the most imposing domed structures in the world – larger than the Taj Mahal. When the church was dedicated in 1901, only the United States Capitol boasted a larger steel dome.

At the time of its elevation to a Basilica by Pope Pius XI in 1929, it was North America's third basilica. And Wisconsin's first – an honor reserved for the grandest, most beautiful and most historically significant structures.

Since its completion in 1901, it has been a place of pilgrimage – not only for those seeking inspiration, but for arts and culture patrons who experience the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Bel Canto Chorus and countless college and university choirs. We are also an educational destination for school groups of all ages and Milwaukee's #1 visitor attraction as rated by TripAdvisor. We are welcoming more and more international visitors. In the past two weeks, visitors from Germany, Israel, Poland, Australia, China and Ecuador have passed through our doors. The need to make it efficient and clear for them to find their way to the Basilica from the interstate grows ever more important.

Your support for this legislation will stand as a testament to the spirit of the people who built and support our great State.

All my best,

Susan A. Rabe
President & CEO



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

March 20, 2015

Ms. Susan A. Rabe
President & CEO
St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation
620 W. Lincoln Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53215

Dear Ms. Rabe:

I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 83/Senate Bill 11, which will introduce legislation requiring the Department of Transportation to erect and maintain four directional signs along the eastbound and westbound corridor of the I-94 highway for the Basilica of St. Josaphat in the City of Milwaukee. These directional signs will provide an opportunity to the thousands of visitors who visit Milwaukee from throughout the world to experience the beautiful architecture and rich history the Basilica has been able to offer since the late 1800's.

The Basilica of St. Josaphat is one of Milwaukee's most treasured historic landmarks. Built more than 100 years ago, it was registered as a national historic site in 1973 and is one of the only 62 remaining basilicas in the country. An architectural gem with a commitment to welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, St. Josaphat is integral to the arts and cultural landscape of our community. Located in Lincoln Village, one of the most diverse and vibrant communities, it is one of the top tourist attractions for the City of Milwaukee.

For many Milwaukee citizens, the Basilica has been host to their family's baptisms, first communions and weddings. The Basilica has hosted concerts and special events including the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Blue Mass for law enforcement officers and the White Mass for healthcare professionals. I take tremendous pride in the Basilica's presence here in our great City and I commend the St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation for their continued support, dedication and contributions to the historic preservation and restoration of the Basilica.

The Basilica of St. Josaphat is truly a community asset to the City of Milwaukee and our state. Thank you for your contributions to the community.

Sincerely,

Tom Barrett
Mayor

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March 31, 2015

Representative JoCasta Zamarripa
And all Assembly Transportation Committee members

RE: Interstate signs for the Basilica of St. Josaphat

As the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation on which I served for the past 24 years, I voice a strong affirmative in support of the signage.

The Basilica stands as a testament to the immigrants who built one of the major cities in our great state. It stood when it was completed as a beacon of hope for the surrounding community and continues to do so as new immigrants flock to the area, live and work within its shadow. The Basilica remains an anchor of a vibrant community. The grandeur of the building attracts thousands of people each year to view its architecture, its precious artwork, its incredible Austrian stained glass windows and the lofty dome that rises over 250 feet above Lincoln Avenue.

For all those who do visit, many more miss the experience and an opportunity to see a masterpiece. That is due to the lack of freeway signage. The City of Milwaukee has committed to street signage once visitors find their way off the freeway. The more visitors that visit the Basilica, the more the reputation of the City and State grow. This helps the economic development that we all want for the area and the State.

Please support this important legislation. Thank you.

Edward Cichurski
Chairman Emeritus

620 West Lincoln Avenue | Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215

p (414) 902-3524 | f (414) 643-8376 | info@thebasilicafoundation.org | www.thebasilicafoundation.org



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

March 26, 2015

The Honorable,
Members of the Wisconsin State Senate

Honorable Members,

This letter expresses our strong support for the erection of Interstate Highway informational signage relating to the Basilica of St. Josaphat along I-94/43.

Ald. Pérez represents the aldermanic district in which the Basilica is located and is long familiar with the central place it holds in both his district and the City as a whole. It is one of only two basilicas in the entire state of Wisconsin and is listed as the number one tourist destination in the City of Milwaukee by Trip Advisor. The Basilica Foundation has done much to renovate the church's exterior and refurbish the interior to offer a wealth of historical and cultural information to visitors. Moreover, its location as the gateway to the Lincoln Village area makes it a significant stimulant to economic and residential development.

The Basilica's copper dome along the skyline of the City's south side is a familiar sight to local residents, Milwaukeeans, and all who travel along the Interstate. The placement of an informational marker along I-94/43 is both appropriate and encouraged.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ald. Pérez's office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'José G. Pérez'.

José G. Pérez
Alderman, 12th District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Murphy'.

Michael J. Murphy
Common Council President

GFD

3-23-15

Susan A. Rabe

President and CEO

St. Josephat Basilica Foundation

620 W. Lincoln Ave

Milwaukee, WI 53215

Re: Interstate Signs for the Basilica of St. Josephat

Dear Susan,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11/Assembly 83 on Interstate 94 for the Basilica of St. Josephat,

The Basilica of St. Josephat is one of Milwaukee's most treasured historic landmarks. From the outside, the Basilica is extremely impressive. When you enter through its majestic doors, its like heaven has surrounded you. It is the jewel of Milwaukee and a destination people travel to from around the world. It has a rich and compelling history which needs to be shared with all visitors.

Signs on the Interstate will provide visitors to Milwaukee the opportunity to find their way easily

GFD

to the Basilica. So many events are held there every month all year long. As well as scores of tour buses that travel from all over the Midwest.

The Basilica is the dazzling gem of Milwaukee which should be shared with all who appreciate its beauty and history. Please support this important legislation.

Thank you,

Ger: Gotsch



PROVINCE OF SAINT BONAVENTURE

ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR CONVENTUAL
6107 NORTH KENMORE AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60660-2797

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER PROVINCIAL

(773) 274-7681
FAX (773) 274-9751

March 20, 2015

Dear Senators Timothy Carpenter, Paul Farrow and all other State Senators,
Praised be Jesus Christ!

I am writing in behalf of Senate Bill 11 and Assembly Bill 83 requesting signage on the Interstate to tell all people travelling through Wisconsin about the great treasure the Basilica of St. Josaphat is; not just for Roman Catholics, but for all people who appreciate great architecture and the struggle of a people who wanted to build a monument to God with great historical significance. The Polish people came to our great country seeking a better way of life which included worship of God. In seeking a better way of life, they built a monument to God that continues to show us today, that with hard work, dedication to family life and values; a lasting historical landmark can be made announcing to all people of good faith nothing is impossible in these great United States.

I strongly support Senate Bill 11 and Assembly Bill 83 and encourage both Houses to pass this Bill. The Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee is a treasure for all who pass through southern Wisconsin and signage on the interstate will only show how Wisconsin's State leaders truly value its state history!

May the Lord continue to bless you as you lead the people of Wisconsin in truth, justice and the pursuit of all that is good!

Yours in Christ and St. Francis,

Fr. Michael Ziefke, OFM Conv.

Minister Provincial



Susan Rabe <srabe@thebasilicafoundation.org>

Support of SB11

1 message

Fr. Michael Glastetter <frmichael99@aol.com>

Mon, Mar 23, 2015 at 2:41 PM

To: Susan Rabe <srabe@thebasilicafoundation.org>

The Basilica of Saint Josaphat is an historic destination on the South Side of Milwaukee. Each week we welcome tourists and visitors from all over the State of Wisconsin and from all parts of our nation. The Basilica is continually ranked as one of the top tourist destinations in the city of Milwaukee. People are drawn to this edifice to learn about its history, art, and architecture. Whether they come in groups on buses or as individuals in cars they typically arrive via the Interstate Highway system. Passage of this Senate Bill (SB11) would allow signs directing thousands of annual visitors to more easily reach the Basilica. For some, the Basilica is their primary destination, for others it is a stop along the way in visiting other great places. By assisting travelers through adequate signage, SB11 would help to provide a positive experience of hospitality and welcome to Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin. I support passage of this Bill and encourage others to do the same.

Peace,

Fr. Michael Glastetter, OFM Conv.

Very Rev. Michael J. Glastetter, OFM Conv.
Rector-Pastor

The Basilica of St. Josaphat
2333 S. Sixth Street
Milwaukee, WI 53215

www.TheBasilica.org
FrMichael99@aol.com

February 20, 2015

To the Senators and Representatives advocating for Bill SB11:

"I saw you from the Interstate, and didn't quite know how to get to you." I hear this, and think in the same breath; how fortunate I am that they associate me with the Basilica and we are working on getting interstate signs to help you out.

On average, the Basilica of St. Josaphat welcomes thousands of visitors per month, ranging from school groups to elderly nursing homes. Here, they have the opportunity to experience the rich culture and heritage of the Milwaukee South Side. These groups of people hear about the Basilica through another's personal experience or through advertisements found online and so make the trip or add it to their itinerary to visit while in the area. Once the decision has been made to visit, then come the need to navigate through the Interstate to reach us as their destination. The vast size of the Basilica catches the eye, but those who are unfamiliar with Milwaukee struggle in deciphering which exit to take.

A sign points to something greater, leads someone to experience a new and exciting adventure. Your support of permitting signs to be displayed on the Interstate will vitally help point seekers to find the truth, goodness, and beauty that is the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Even in our day and age of technology, travelers find confirmation and affirmation in following the signs that help them arrive at a destination successfully. I am convinced that the signs will significantly help increase people's ability to come (many spontaneously because of the visual sign) and walk the history of the Basilica.

Thank you for your continued discernment on helping us to reach people in all walks of life to come and see history, culture, tradition, beauty. "The Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the beginning, is now, and will be forever."

Marianne Giovingo
Visitor Center Coordinator
Basilica of St. Josaphat

Susan Robe and Wisconsin State Senators

Sometimes referred to as a jewel of the near South Side, please consider the importance of the Basilica of St. Joseph's role in the Milwaukee tourism industry. As an educator and a docent at St. Joseph's, I relay the history of Polish immigration to Milwaukee which resulted in the building of the Basilica. Consecrated as the 3rd Basilica in the U.S. in 1929, we are also a Minor Basilica in an elevated status. In addition to weekly Sunday tours, groups also come through for a docent led tour. Many find us on the Internet, check out our web page, and opt for a self-guided walk-through tour. For others who are not tech savvy, a DOT sign would promote tourism. I've toured groups locally, statewide, nationwide, and as far away as Australia. Additionally, tour groups sometimes patronize neighborhood ethnic restaurants... thus promoting tourism.

There are 2 Basilicas in Wisconsin. Holy Hill has a DOT sign. It's time for one for the Basilica of St. Joseph's.

Vergil Bundick PhD

Testimony of C.J. Krawczyk
In support of 2015 Assembly Bill 83

March 25, 2015
10:00 a.m.

Thank you to the Chair and to the Committee for the opportunity to speak briefly in support of this Bill. My name is C.J. Krawczyk. I am a lifelong resident of the City of Milwaukee and have been proud to serve as a Board Director of the St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation for the past three years.

Given the spelling and pronunciation of my last name, you'll probably be unsurprised to learn that I (too) am of Polish descent. My family's origins trace back to the same Polish community on Milwaukee's south side whose members established St. Josaphat's and have helped to maintain it through generations.

The Basilica is a building that really shouldn't exist, but we are so lucky that it does. In addition to being a vibrant Catholic parish, it is a cultural and historical treasure; an architectural masterpiece; and the home of some of the most beautiful art to be found anywhere in this State. That it was built in the first place – using largely recycled materials in an era when the term “horsepower” could be taken literally – and endures to this day is a testament to the vision, ingenuity, and frankly, to the stubbornness of the people who have supported it since the time construction began in 1896.

Needless to say, those nearly 120 years of survival haven't all been easy. There were periods when the Basilica fell into disrepair and its future viability was very much in doubt. Some of those challenges persist today, particularly with respect to the exterior masonry, which demands nearly constant attention — and by attention, I mean money.

So what does all of this have to do with roads signs, you may ask? Well, the reality is that, in order to continue to fulfill the Foundation's mission of preserving, restoring, and enhancing the Basilica, we rely exclusively on private donations. And much of our support comes from the thousands of individuals, families, and students who visit each year and, upon doing so, are moved to donate.

The passage of this Bill will assist us greatly in our work by making St. Josaphat's more visible to motorists as they drive by on the interstate and by delivering those who wish to see it for themselves more efficiently to its front door.

Despite it being a top tourist attraction, I am often surprised by the number of Wisconsinites who tell me they've never visited the Basilica. A common reason we hear is that it is confusing to get to from the highway, especially when approaching from the north, because if one waits until the dome is in full view, the exit has already been missed.

These signs, which will be erected and maintained at no cost to taxpayers, will remedy that problem and, by simplifying their journey, will substantially increase the number of visitors who get to experience the Basilica each year. That is good not only for the Foundation and for the parish, it's good for the economic development and stability of surrounding Lincoln Village community, for the City of Milwaukee and, ultimately, for all citizens of this State.

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will lend us your support in passing Assembly Bill 83.

Again, thank for your time and for this opportunity.



National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe

MARYTOWN

Conventual Franciscan Friars of Marytown
1600 West Park Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048-2563

www.marytown.com
mail@marytown.com

Tel: (847) 367-7800
Fax: (847) 367-7831

March 28, 2015

Susan A. Rabe
President & CEO
St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation
620 W. Lincoln Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53215

RE: Wisconsin State Assembly Bill 83

To Members of the Assembly,

I am writing this letter requesting the approval of Assembly Bill 83 to place signs on Interstate I94 informing travelers of the location of St. Josaphat Basilica. The Basilica is not only a place of worship but an important, historic and aesthetically beautiful landmark in the City of Milwaukee. Therefore, it would not only bring visitors there but also offer support to the local businesses in the area, such as food services and hotels and other beautiful cultural attractions. In doing this, it would enrich the popularity of the entire State of Wisconsin, as Milwaukee is such a significant city within the State. It would also allow us to direct visitors that come to our Shrine from the entire US to continue their travel to Wisconsin.

Sincerely yours,

Very Rev. John P. Grigus, OFM Conv.
Vicar Provincial: Franciscan Friars of St. Bonaventure Province
Rector: National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Marytown's legal title is:
Conventual Franciscan Friars of Marytown, Libertyville, Illinois