

# Native Americans in Capitol Art: An Opportunity for Change

Minnesota's State Capitol artwork tells a narrow and incomplete version of our history. It has offensive images of Native Americans and does not reflect our state's current diverse population. This should not come as a surprise, since much of the art dates from the early 1900s when the Capitol was built.

However, we now face a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for change. A major capitol renovation is underway. The Capitol Preservation Commission has created an Art Subcommittee to gather broad public comment on what stories the capitol art should tell about Minnesota, its history, and its people. This is an opportunity to make your voice heard!



## Here is what we are asking the state:

- 1. Remove offensive, traumatizing paintings** from the capitol, including: *The Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi*; *Father Hennepin Discovers St. Anthony Falls*; *the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux*; and *The Battle of Killdeer Mountain*. Given what the capitol represents to our civic life, we can find better symbols of Minnesota values and greater moments to highlight in our state's history.
- 2. Find a new home for the capitol art** that is removed, where it can be remembered and interpreted.
- 3. Better interpret the capitol's remaining historic art**, preferably with interactive touch screens.
- 4. Provide more in-depth training for capitol tour guides** on the art's history and meaning.
- 5. Add new capitol art that reflects and honors Minnesota's current ethnic and cultural diversity.**



**"Discoverers and the Civilizers led to the Source of the Mississippi," is in the Minnesota Senate Chambers.**

**SIGN OUR PETITION:** <http://tinyurl.com/oz8xdzo>

*To make your voice heard, you can contact:*

## **Art Subcommittee Membership:**

- The Hon. Paul Anderson, Minnesota Supreme Court (ret.) Co-Chair,
- Sen. David Senjem, Co-Chair, 651-296-3903, [sen.david.senjem@senate.mn](mailto:sen.david.senjem@senate.mn)
- Rep. Diane Loeffler, Co-Chair, 651-296-4219, [rep.diane.loeffler@house.mn](mailto:rep.diane.loeffler@house.mn)
- Prof. Gwen Westerman, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 507-389-5508, [gwen.westerman@mnsu.edu](mailto:gwen.westerman@mnsu.edu)
- Anton Treuer, Executive Director, American Indian Resource Center, 218-755-2032, [atreuer@bemidjistate.edu](mailto:atreuer@bemidjistate.edu)
- Prof. William Green, Augsburg College, 612-330-1544, [greenb@augsborg.edu](mailto:greenb@augsborg.edu)
- Peter Hilger, University of Minnesota
- Ted Lentz, Ted Lentz & Assoc. and the Cass Gilbert Society, 651-222-8117, [tlentz@minn.net](mailto:tlentz@minn.net)
- Sen. Ann Rest, 651-296-2889
- Rep. Dean Urdahl, 651-296-4344, [rep.dean.urdahl@house.mn](mailto:rep.dean.urdahl@house.mn)
- Matt Massman, Commissioner of Administration, 651-201-2555, [Matt.Massman@state.mn.us](mailto:Matt.Massman@state.mn.us)
- Matthew Welch, Deputy Director, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 612-870-3043 (administration line)
- Dana Badgerow, President & CEO, Better Business Bureau, 651-699-1111 (general BBB number)
- D. Stephen Elliott, Director/CEO, Minnesota Historical Society, ex-officio, 651-259-3100, [director@mnhs.org](mailto:director@mnhs.org)
- Paul Mandell, Executive Secretary, Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, ex-officio, 651.757.1507, [paul.mandell@state.mn.us](mailto:paul.mandell@state.mn.us)

## **Follow the Process**

Follow the **Art Subcommittee**'s progress on its website: <http://mn.gov/admin/capitol-restoration/about/preservation-commission/art/> .

**Healing Minnesota Stories** will blog on this issue at: <https://healingmnstories.wordpress.com/>  
Just click the "follow" icon to get updates. Healing Minnesota Stories began in 2012 to create opportunities for understanding and healing between Native and non-Native Peoples, particularly those in religious communities. We are an initiative of the Saint Paul Interfaith Network (SPIN). For more information, contact Scott Russell at [scottrussell@usfamily.net](mailto:scottrussell@usfamily.net) or see our website: <http://spinterfaith.org/healing-minnesota-stories.html>