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Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Mindy Crawford, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania. We are a statewide nonprofit organization with a mission of helping people protect and preserve the places that matter to them.

I am here to ask you to act favorably on HB 2082. This legislation will permanently protect Gettysburg National Military Park and Flight 93 National Memorial by creating a 10 mile casino-free buffer – what supporters have deemed a zone of respect. Because of topography, rolling terrain, and traffic patterns, a ten mile buffer is necessary to mask the intrusion of a large category one casino on these historic landmarks. Anything less would potentially allow a casino to be seen from the heights of Culp's Hill or Little Round Top or the hallowed fields of Shanksville. Ten miles also provides a transition zone free of casinos and the growth and transportation challenges they would ultimately bring with them.

Additionally, Preservation Pennsylvania supports this legislation for three straightforward reasons.

1. As the statewide voice for historic preservation, Preservation Pennsylvania is asked to be involved in many issues where our state's rich heritage is at risk. The decision to fight for protection of Gettysburg resulted from the overwhelmingly large outpouring of calls, emails and letters asking us to help keep a casino license from being awarded here. After two attempts were unsuccessful, we are still receiving requests to go a step farther by finding some way to offer permanent protection from this ever happening again. In our 30 years of working to protect Pennsylvania's historic resources, the casino issue at Gettysburg is still the one that evokes the largest response from our members and supporters. Polling conducted in April of 2011 also showed that the overwhelming majority of Pennsylvania voters were opposed to a casino at Gettysburg and supported legislation that would buffer that site from future casino development – in short: Pennsylvania supports HB 2082.
2. While there are countless resources that can be considered historic in Pennsylvania, there are a few that truly stand out as highly important. Gettysburg is one of those places. We heard it time and time again about this hallowed ground. But what of the other site under consideration here today? There is no question that Flight 93 National Memorial certainly deserves our respect. And though sparsely populated today, we must take decisive action to protect this important place now before a proposal comes along, as it has twice at Gettysburg. One hundred years ago, no one in Adams County could have contemplated the growth that region has experienced, or the effort to place a gambling hall on hallowed ground, but that is

our current reality. By acting favorably on HB 2082 you will be making certain that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania avoids the embarrassment of a debate over a casino at Flight 93 – or Gettysburg ever again.

3. My last reason for asking for your support of this bill centers on the economic impacts of casinos. In 2010, total visitor spending at Gettysburg amounted to \$63,573,000, only \$500,000 of that from local residents. Heritage visitors to Gettysburg contribute significantly to the local economy and support more than 1000 local jobs and 90 park jobs. Visitors to Flight 93 contributed \$6,856,000 to the local economy, again only \$500,000 of that from local residents.

So why not embrace casinos as a way to create more jobs and more income? In the current economic climate, everyone is concerned about job creation. But job creation goes hand in hand with keeping our current businesses strong and successful. It is true that existing residents and visitors would spend money in a casino but much of this is money that would have otherwise been spent elsewhere in the local economy. Diverted spending would negatively impact local businesses and jobs. Additionally, the estimated jobs to be created as a result of a casino are often part time and seasonal and pay little more than minimum wage. The impact to the local economy can be detrimental.

Vicksburg, Miss., is an often-cited as a valid parallel for the situation in Gettysburg. Before casinos opened there, Vicksburg National Military Park ran a close second to Gettysburg in visitation among NPS Civil War sites. But in 1994, when the casinos opened, visitation plunged and took four years to rebound. Hurricane Katrina caused another dive in 2005, but unlike other national parks in Mississippi and Louisiana, Vicksburg NMP's visitation has not yet recovered; recent visitation is consistent with the 1980s, when the park introduced entrance fees, or during the 1970s oil-embargo. *While Park visitation plummeted by as much as 20 percent once Vicksburg's casinos opened, traffic bypassing the Park's main entrance rose 12 percent, and traffic on segments of old Highway 61— the primary access road for Vicksburg's main casino complex — exploded by 64 percent.* Today, traffic on key segments of Vicksburg's historic downtown area is 17 percent lower than it was in 1998, and 40 percent of buildings are vacant.

The lesson is clear: casinos and heritage tourism do not go hand in hand.

Fortunately, Pennsylvania's historic sites need not suffer the same fate as Mississippi's. By proactively safeguarding these two national significant sites we are making a clear message: Pennsylvania respects her history and is determined to keep the Commonwealth an inviting place for heritage tourists