

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I enjoyed reading the “conversation” with Reid Williamson (president of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana) and Sal Cilella (president and CEO of the Indiana Historical Society) that appeared in the June issue. The *Journal of Urban History* ran a series of similar interviews some years ago, and they were always interesting and often informative. I hope the *Indiana Magazine of History* will publish similar pieces in the future.

I do, however, have one concern: the manner in which the interview was titled. Calling it “The State of Public History in Indiana” suggests that there is a monolithic public history community in the state and that Sal and Reid speak for it. Such is not the case. Indeed, since they direct the two largest and best-endowed historical organizations in Indiana, they are automatically *unrepresentative* of the state’s public history community writ large.

A case in point is their unequivocal support for the creation of a Department of Indiana Heritage. Whether this is theoretically a good idea or not (even leaving aside the flawed legislation proposed thus far) is clearly open to debate, and it would be a mistake for your readers to assume, based on the interview, that all of the state’s public historians are in agreement on this subject. In fact, those who would be most directly affected by such a proposal—the employees of the agencies involved—are precluded by the nature of their positions from speaking publicly on the merits and demerits of the plan.

In short, Clio’s house has many mansions. While the opinions of the presidents of HLF and IHS are of obvious interest, readers of the IMH should not be misled by the title of the interview into believing that those opinions reflect the beliefs of all public historians in Indiana.

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