

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 5, 2001
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 14, 2001
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2001-02 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 113

Introduced by Assembly Member Pavley
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aroner, *John Campbell, Correa,*
***Hertzberg, Horton, Liu, Robert Pacheco, and Strom-Martin*)**
(Coauthors: Senators Bowen, Costa, Kuehl, Murray, and Speier)

January 18, 2001

An act to add Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 8760) to Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to the California Poet Laureate.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 113, as amended, Pavley. California Poet Laureate.

Existing law establishes the Arts Council and sets forth the duties of the council in promoting the arts in the state.

This bill would establish the position of California Poet Laureate, who would be appointed for a specified term by the Governor from a list of nominees garnered by the council through a specified process, and who would perform specified duties. It would ~~provide for a grant program for poetic artists, for the purpose of specific poetic projects, according to guidelines and criteria established by the council~~ *authorize the council to pay an appropriate stipend to the California Poet Laureate and would require the council to provide for the payment of his or her expenses, as specified.*

This bill would authorize the council to solicit and receive gifts, donations, bequests, grants of funds, or any other revenues, from public or private sources and to expend those moneys to increase the stipend of the California Poet Laureate and for any other purpose it deems necessary to implement this bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) It is widely acknowledged that the ability to read is essential
4 to the acquisition of a good education and to increase the prospects
5 of a productive life and that general literacy among our people is
6 essential to our reputation in the community of nations.

7 (b) In the acknowledgement of this truth, the Governor and the
8 Legislature in recent years have invested heavily to ensure that all
9 California’s children acquire excellent reading skills and have
10 engaged with students in reading programs and undertaken other
11 literacy programs and activities to ensure that the love and
12 enjoyment of books is a significant component of the education of
13 every child.

14 (c) The arts generally have been shown to have a positive
15 impact on the ability of our children to learn, to create greater
16 interest in academic programs, and to enrich and enliven the great
17 cultural heritage of California.

18 (d) California’s poets have long been acknowledged as among
19 the most prestigious in the nation, and include numerous Nobel
20 Prize, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and other significant
21 award recipients, and at least three United States’ Poets Laureate.
22 California’s poets also come from every ethnic, religious, and
23 geographic region of the state, and have often provided a great
24 source of inspiration to their communities, students and other
25 young people, and the people of California generally.

26 (e) The California Poets in the Schools program, in which
27 professional poets work with children in Kindergarten through
28 12th grade in almost every county in the state, has created great
29 interest in the poetic arts among California’s children and youth.
30 This interest is evidenced by the large number of reading series,



1 chapbook publications, poetry-based websites, which have ~~the~~
2 ~~second~~ among the largest number of “hits” of all website types,
3 and other *popular* poetic activities.

4 (f) The United States, many states, and many cities have
5 established the position of Poet Laureate, using vigorous and
6 competitive appointment procedures and requiring recipients to
7 engage in specific public projects.

8 SEC. 2. Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 8760) is
9 added to Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, to read:

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CHAPTER 9.5. CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

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13 8760. (a) The position of California Poet Laureate is hereby
14 established.

15 (b) The California Poet Laureate shall be appointed by the
16 Governor from a list of three nominees provided by the Arts
17 Council garnered through the following process:

18 (1) The council shall establish a panel of three literary experts,
19 which may include any of the following:

20 (A) Literature professors and teachers, including professional
21 poets teaching in such programs as California Poets in the Schools
22 and other arts in schools programs.

23 (B) Public and private arts organizations that have a significant
24 literary component.

25 (C) Professional poets.

26 (D) Boards and directors of literary organizations.

27 (E) Literary critics.

28 (F) Others deemed by the director to have expertise in
29 contemporary American poetry.

30 (2) (A) The panel shall solicit nominations from a broad array
31 of literary sources and individuals, including, but not limited to,
32 all of the following:

33 (i) University and college literature departments.

34 (ii) Literary organizations, societies, and centers.

35 (iii) Poetry book publishers and poetry editors.

36 (iv) Directors of poetry reading series.

37 (v) Independent book sellers specializing in poetry.

38 (B) The panel shall make every effort to ensure that
39 information regarding the solicitation of nominations is broadly
40 distributed.



1 (3) The council may establish other rules and regulations
2 regarding the nomination process and expend funds for those
3 purposes.

4 (c) Each nominee for California Poet Laureate *submitted by the*
5 *Arts Council to the Governor* shall have resided in California for
6 at least 10 years, have a significant body of published work, and
7 be widely considered to be a poet of stature.

8 (d) A poet laureate appointed pursuant to this section shall
9 serve for a term of two years, and may not serve more than two
10 terms.

11 8761. The Arts Council ~~shall~~ *may* establish an appropriate
12 stipend for the California Poet Laureate ~~for and shall provide for~~
13 ~~the payment of~~ the poet laureate's expenses incurred in fulfilling
14 his or her responsibilities as set forth in this chapter and as
15 established by the council. Additionally, the council may make
16 available other funds for activities that the council and the
17 California Poet Laureate mutually agree to undertake, ~~such as~~
18 *including, but not limited to*, the lease of facilities for readings and
19 the acquiring of insurance ~~therefor~~ *therefor*, and other similar
20 activities.

21 8762. The California Poet Laureate shall, as a condition of the
22 appointment, assume the following minimum responsibilities:

23 (a) Provide a minimum of six public readings during his or her
24 two year-term endeavoring to ensure that people in all geographic
25 regions of the state have reasonable access to at least one reading
26 during the course of the term.

27 (b) Undertake a specific project that shall last through the term,
28 agreed to by the California Poet Laureate and the council, but
29 whose goal will be to bring the poetic arts to Californians and to
30 California students who might otherwise have little opportunity to
31 be exposed to poetry. The California Poet Laureate may, and is
32 encouraged to, coordinate his or her project with any similar
33 project being undertaken by the current United States' Poet
34 Laureate.

35 (c) Any other reasonable activities as agreed to mutually by the
36 California Poet Laureate and the council.

37 8763. The Arts Council shall, commencing in 2010 and every
38 10 years thereafter, and with the agreement of the past California
39 Poets Laureate and their representatives, publish or cause to be



1 published an anthology featuring examples of the work of the
2 poets laureate of the past decade.

3 ~~8764. The Arts Council shall award grants to poetic artists~~
4 ~~who apply for the purpose of specific poetic projects, according to~~
5 ~~guidelines and criteria established by the council.~~

6 8765. The council may solicit and receive gifts, donations,
7 bequests, grants of funds, or any other revenues, from public or
8 private sources, and expend those moneys to increase the stipend
9 of the California Poet Laureate and for any other purpose it deems
10 necessary to implement this chapter.

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