

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 11, 2001

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 *and confirmed by the Senate* from a list of nominees garnered by the council through a specified process, and who would perform specified duties. It would 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 acknowledgment 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,
31 chapbook publications, poetry-based websites, which have among



1 the largest number of “hits” of all website types, and other popular
2 poetic activities.

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

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

9

10 CHAPTER 9.5. CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

11

12 8760. (a) The position of California Poet Laureate is hereby
13 established.

14 (b) The California Poet Laureate shall be appointed by the
15 Governor *and confirmed by the Senate* from a list of three
16 nominees provided by the Arts Council garnered through the
17 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
5 the Arts Council to the Governor shall have resided in California
6 for 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 may establish an appropriate stipend
12 for the California Poet Laureate and shall provide for the payment
13 of the poet laureate’s expenses incurred in fulfilling his or her
14 responsibilities as set forth in this chapter and as established by the
15 council. Additionally, the council may make available other funds
16 for activities that the council and the California Poet Laureate
17 mutually agree to undertake, including, but not limited to, the lease
18 of facilities for readings and the acquiring of insurance therefor,
19 and other similar activities.

20 8762. The California Poet Laureate shall, as a condition of the
21 appointment, assume the following minimum responsibilities:

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

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

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

36 8763. The Arts Council shall, commencing in 2010 and every
37 10 years thereafter, and with the agreement of the past California
38 Poets Laureate and their representatives, publish or cause to be
39 published an anthology featuring examples of the work of the
40 poets laureate of the past decade.



1 8765. The council may solicit and receive gifts, donations,
2 bequests, grants of funds, or any other revenues, from public or
3 private sources, and expend those moneys to increase the stipend
4 of the California Poet Laureate and for any other purpose it deems
5 necessary to implement this chapter.

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