

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 113

**Introduced by Assembly Member Pavley
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aroner and Hertzberg)**

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, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 113, as introduced, 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.

This bill would establish the California Poetic Works Fund in the State Treasury, to consist of moneys from specified sources. Moneys in the fund would be continuously appropriated to the council without regard to fiscal years for the purposes of the bill.

Vote: ²/₃. Appropriation: yes. 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,
31 chapbook publications, poetry-based websites, which have the
32 second largest number of 'hits' of all website types, and other
33 poetic activities.

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



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

3
4 CHAPTER 9.5. CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE
5

6 8760. (a) The position of California Poet Laureate is hereby
7 established.

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

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

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

16 (B) Public and private arts organizations that have a significant
17 literary component.

18 (C) Professional poets.

19 (D) Boards and directors of literary organizations.

20 (E) Literary critics.

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

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

26 (i) University and college literature departments.

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

28 (iii) Poetry book publishers and poetry editors.

29 (iv) Directors of poetry reading series.

30 (v) Independent book sellers specializing in poetry.

31 (B) The panel shall make every effort to ensure that
32 information regarding the solicitation of nominations is broadly
33 distributed.

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

37 (c) Each nominee for California Poet Laureate shall have
38 resided in California for at least 10 years, have a significant body
39 of published work, and be widely considered to be a poet of stature.

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

4 8761. The Arts Council shall establish an appropriate stipend
5 for the California Poet Laureate for the poet laureate's expenses
6 incurred in fulfilling his or her responsibilities as set forth in this
7 chapter and as established by the council. Additionally, the council
8 may make available other funds for activities that the council and
9 the California Poet Laureate mutually agree to undertake, such as
10 the lease of facilities for readings and the acquiring of insurance
11 therefor, and other similar activities.

12 8762. The California Poet Laureate shall, as a condition of the
13 appointment, assume the following minimum responsibilities:

14 (a) Provide a minimum of six public readings during his or her
15 two year-term endeavoring to ensure that people in all geographic
16 regions of the state have reasonable access to at least one reading
17 during the course of the term. Any proceeds from the readings
18 shall be deposited in the California Poetic Works Fund established
19 pursuant to Section 8765.

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

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

30 8763. The Arts Council shall, commencing in 2010 and every
31 10 years thereafter, and with the agreement of the past California
32 Poets Laureate and their representatives, publish or cause to be
33 published an anthology featuring examples of the work of the
34 poets laureate of the past decade.

35 8764. The Arts Council shall award grants to poetic artists
36 who apply for the purpose of specific poetic projects, according to
37 guidelines and criteria established by the council.

38 8765. (a) The California Poetic Works Fund is hereby
39 created in the State Treasury. Notwithstanding Section 13340,
40 moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the Arts



1 Council without regard to fiscal years for the purposes of this
2 chapter.

3 (b) The fund shall consist of proceeds from the sales of works
4 of poets laureate, including anthologies published pursuant to
5 Section 8763, and any other moneys provided from any public or
6 private source.

7 (c) The council may solicit and receive gifts, donations,
8 bequests, or grants of funds from public or private sources for the
9 purposes of this chapter.

