

Assembly Bill No. 113

Passed the Assembly August 20, 2001

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Passed the Senate July 19, 2001

Secretary of the Senate

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day of
_____, 2001, at _____ o'clock __M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

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CHAPTER _____

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, 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.

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

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

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

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



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

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

(e) The California Poets in the Schools program, in which professional poets work with children in Kindergarten through 12th grade in almost every county in the state, has created great interest in the poetic arts among California’s children and youth. This interest is evidenced by the large number of reading series, chapbook publications, poetry-based Web sites, which have among the largest number of “hits” of all Web site types, and other popular poetic activities.

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

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

CHAPTER 9.5. CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

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

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

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

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



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

(C) Professional poets.

(D) Boards and directors of literary organizations.

(E) Literary critics.

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

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

(i) University and college literature departments.

(ii) Literary organizations, societies, and centers.

(iii) Poetry book publishers and poetry editors.

(iv) Directors of poetry reading series.

(v) Independent book sellers specializing in poetry.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Approved _____, 2001

Governor

