
State Government Committee

HB 1570

Brief Description: Creating the position of poet laureate.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, Kenney, Holmquist, Hudgins and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the position of state Poet Laureate to promote and encourage poetry within the state.

Hearing Date: 2/21/03

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Washington State Arts Commission was established in 1961. In 1965 the Legislature authorized the Arts Commission to designate a poet laureate for the state, but that authority was repealed in 1985. The Arts Commission develops, sponsors, promotes and administers activities, projects, or programs related to the growth and development of the arts and humanities in the state and assists any person or public or private agency in that effort.

Most states have a poet laureate. Only Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Ohio and Washington do not.

Summary of Bill:

The position of Poet Laureate is created to engage in activities to promote and encourage poetry within the state. The Poet Laureate will give a minimum of twenty readings, workshops, lectures, and/or presentations for Washington educational institutions and communities in geographically diverse areas over a two-year term.

Selection of a poet laureate will be made by a committee appointed by the Washington Commission for the Humanities (Humanities Commission). Representatives on the committee may include members from the Washington State Library, education community, the Washington State Arts Commission, the Commission for the Humanities, the publishing community, and the community of Washington poets.

The Poet Laureate must be a published poet, a resident of the state, active in the poetry community, and willing and able to promote poetry in Washington state throughout the two-year term. The Poet Laureate may not serve more than two consecutive two-year terms.

The bill states that the Humanities Commission will coordinate the committee and administer the poet laureate program; however the Humanities Commission is a private, non-profit entity and the Legislature cannot direct a private entity to administer a state program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.