

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1279

C 128 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing the poet laureate program.

Sponsors: By House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Skinner, Kessler, Lantz, Hasegawa, Dickerson, Haler, McIntire, Conway, Newhouse and Kenney).

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs
Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections

Background:

A poet laureate is a poet officially appointed by a government and expected to perform various duties such as composing poems for government events or promoting the appreciation of reading and writing poetry. Since the Middle Ages in England, the poet laureate has been the title given to the official poet of the monarch. Many former British colonies, such as Canada, South Africa, and the United States, appoint poets laureate. In the United States, many other states and cities do so.

Summary:

The Legislature wishes to recognize:

- the value of poetry and the contribution Washington poets make to the culture of the state;
- that poetry is a literary form respected and growing throughout all segments of Washington's population;
- that awareness and appreciation of poetry encourages increased literacy and advanced communication skills; and
- that Washington has produced many excellent and nationally recognized poets.

The Washington State Arts Commission (Commission) must establish and administer the Poet Laureate Program. A committee, appointed and coordinated by the Commission, will recommend a poet laureate for a two-year term. The Commission, with the approval of the Governor, makes the final selection. The poet laureate must be a published poet, a resident of Washington, active in the poetry community, and willing and able to promote poetry throughout the two-year term.

The poet laureate must engage in activities to promote and encourage poetry within the state and will receive compensation at a level determined by the Commission.

A nonappropriated Poet Laureate Account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. After an initial \$30,000 appropriation, the Commission must fund the Poet Laureate Program through gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private sources

Votes on Final Passage:

House	90	5
Senate	45	2

Effective: July 22, 2007