
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

HB 1279

Brief Description: Establishing the poet laureate program.

Sponsors: Representatives Skinner, Kessler, Lantz, Hasegawa, Dickerson, Haler, McIntire, Conway, Newhouse and Kenney.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes a Washington state poet laureate program.

Hearing Date: 1/24/07

Staff: Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

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 states and cities also do so.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature wishes to recognize:

- the value of poetry and the contribution Washington poets make to the culture of our 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 state has produced many excellent and nationally recognized poets.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Arts Commission (Commission) shall establish and administer the poet laureate program. A committee, appointed and coordinated by the commission, will select a poet laureate for a two-year term. The poet laureate must be a published poet, a resident of Washington state, active in the poetry community, and willing and able to promote poetry throughout the two-year term.

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

A nonappropriated poet laureate account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. After the initial appropriation, the Commission shall fund the poet laureate program through gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private sources

Appropriation: The sum of \$30,000 is appropriated from the General Fund.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.