

HOUSE No. 4311

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 8, 2024.

The committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3247) of Sarah K. Peake, Rebecca L. Rausch and Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation to create the position of poet laureate of the Commonwealth, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4311) ought to pass.

For the committee,

MINDY DOMB.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to the position of poet laureate for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 official edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting after Section 38, the following section:-

3 Section 38A. (a) Biennially, on or before March 31, the governor may appoint a poet
4 laureate for the commonwealth of Massachusetts from a list of nominees submitted by the poet
5 laureate nominating committee pursuant to subsection (b). The poet laureate shall seek to raise
6 the consciousness of all commonwealth residents, especially school children, to a greater
7 appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry. The poet laureate shall be appointed to serve
8 for a term of 2 years or until a successor is appointed and qualified as provided in this section. In
9 the event of a vacancy in the office of poet laureate, the vacancy shall be filled in the same
10 manner as the original appointment.

11 (b) There shall be a poet laureate nominating committee consisting of the following 5
12 members: the speaker of the house of representatives, or a designee; the senate president, or a
13 designee; 2 members appointed by the governor; and the executive director of the Massachusetts

14 center for the book, or a designee. Members of the poet laureate nominating committee shall
15 serve without compensation.

16 (c) The poet laureate nominating committee shall advertise and receive nominations for
17 the selection of the poet laureate for the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Nominees shall be
18 residents of the commonwealth and shall provide biographical and professional information, as
19 well as supporting representative material, explaining why, based on their poetic
20 accomplishments, they deserve recognition as the poet laureate for commonwealth of
21 Massachusetts. The poet laureate nominating committee shall review all nominations and select
22 3 nominees to submit to the governor biennially on or before February 1.

23 (d) The person appointed to the position of poet laureate may receive remuneration
24 through the Massachusetts center for the book. The Massachusetts center for the book may
25 establish an appropriate stipend for the poet laureate and may provide for the payment of the poet
26 laureate's expenses incurred in fulfilling of their responsibilities, subject to appropriation.