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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/03/14

SPONSOR Egolf LAST UPDATED _____ HM 35

SHORT TITLE Create NM Poet Laureate SB _____

ANALYST Soderquist

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	\$35.0		\$35.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates Senate Memorial 40

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 35 requests the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) develop policies and procedures for establishing, implementing and continuing a New Mexico Poet Laureate position and program. Under the provisions of the legislation, DCA is to provide its recommendations, including necessary statutory changes, to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) by November 1, 2015. Further, the legislation requires the department seek appropriations for the poet laureate position and program in its FY16 budget submission to the LFC and the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA).

HM 35 states the recommendations received from DCA should include appropriate guidelines for the nomination and selection of New Mexico poet laureates; the terms and roles of the poet laureate; clearly defined expectations of the poet laureate as to public appearances, teaching, special projects, poems for state occasions and other duties; financial and program support, including programmatic continuity, and; a mechanism for replacing a poet laureate.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HM 35 provides no appropriations for the proposed study; however, the response received from DCA states the research and planning required for the development of the proposed policies and procedures would require an additional \$35.0 thousand in appropriations to the department in FY15. The additional funding would allow department administrators – including appropriate division directors and members of the Secretary’s staff – to examine the policies and procedures of poet laureate positions in other states and localities, identify current best practices, and pursue the outreach within the state necessary to obtain public opinion on the proposed position and program.

According to the department, the poet laureate program proposed in the legislation includes administrative support within the department and the expectation of statewide outreach and public appearances by the poet laureate. These activities will likely require recurring general fund appropriations in future fiscal years. Some states and localities also provide stipends to poet laureates to allow the individual additional time to write, especially as that writing relates to the duties of the position. If considered an essential part of the proposal, this too would require recurring general fund appropriations in future fiscal years.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Nearly all the states and many communities have appointed poet laureates, the view being that the poet laureate plays a crucial role in keeping the written word accessible and meaningful to individuals from every culture. Methods of nomination, length of terms, duties and obligations, residency requirements, stipends, and other conditions of the appointment vary. Writings from poet laureates have occasionally proven to be controversial due to the political views of the appointed individuals, but in general they are thought to offer critical insight into the meaning of culture and community and, through presentations and dialogue in public settings across states, provide an opportunity for individuals to share their personal experiences and develop greater awareness of the experiences of others.

The response from DCA states that while poetry has a significant audience and enjoys great support throughout New Mexico, appointments of poet laureates at state and local levels can be subject to criticism if the nomination process is not transparent. As a result, any proposal should include detailed department planning and active community outreach to determine appropriate nomination procedures and the essential duties of the position. As there are many forms, traditions, communities, and presentations of poetry in the state, recommendations from the department should acknowledge, engage and invite the diversity of poets, supporters and audiences existing in New Mexico at this time.

DCA named a New Mexico Centennial Poet in conjunction with the New Mexico Centennial Celebration.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The department did not identify any immediate performance implications.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The tasks involved in the development of policies related to the position of poet laureate and the implementation of the poet laureate program as proposed in the legislation would require significant administrative support in the department. The response from DCA stated that the department has the relevant expertise to develop the recommendations proposed in the legislation.

DUPLICATION

SM 40 duplicates the provisions in HB 35.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Recommendations for the nomination of a New Mexico poet laureate and the establishment of a poet laureate program as proposed in the legislation will not be pursued by DCA.

RS/ds