
TO: The Committee for House Bill 1133 Artist Laureate
FROM: Dayna Del Val, president & CEO The Arts Partnership
DATE: January 12, 2021
RE: Providing written testimony for the hearing on Jan 15, 2021

My name is Dayna Del Val. I live in Fargo, in the 11th district. I am writing from my position as President & CEO of The Arts Partnership, the largest regional arts council in the state, representing arts organizations and artists in both Fargo and West Fargo along with those who reside in Moorhead, MN and out into Cass (ND) and Clay (MN) Counties.

I am submitting written and oral testimony regarding the potential for an Artist Laureate position. I have always appreciated that the ND Legislature has seen fit to fund this important role as a representative of the arts sector across the state through the current Poet Laureate position. My greatest area of suggested change comes from feeling that it's time to reverse the unofficial lifetime appointment of any single artist and the privileging of one type of art form over all the others.

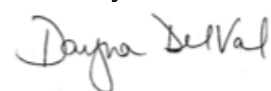
I suggest a two-year appointment by the Governor from recommendations given by a committee of state-wide arts advocates, Legislators, leaders and artists. I would like to see this role take on a much more prominent position across the state with some defined expectations and measurable outcomes expected of the artist who carries the title. This position should be retitled as Artist Laureate so there could be a diversity of artistic mediums and people to hold the position. The Artist Laureate, in addition to receiving the stipend and the very real honor of being selected, should be a recognized role that is celebrated and utilized across the state.

We know that children who are exposed to the arts at an early age do better in school, avoid problems with law enforcement and go on to be more engaged citizens. Elderly citizens show improved cognitive and physical agility when engaging in the arts as well as a lessening of loneliness, a very real challenge, particularly those in the rural parts of the state. In short, everyone benefits from being exposed to the arts, and a person holding this role would be in a position to bring awareness to those issues as well as sharing their particular form of art with people of all ages, at all stages of life and regardless of socioeconomic, racial or educational standing.

I truly appreciate the long-standing support of this program, but I desire to see it become a much more active, dynamic, responsive position that is spread across the entire arts sector for the betterment of all of our state's citizens. The arts are for everyone, and a role like this can go a long way towards ensuring that that is true.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Dayna Del Val, The Arts Partnership