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NEWS RELEASE

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed the following piece of legislation:

ACS for A-2714, sponsored by Assembly Members Richard H. Bagger (R-Middlesex/Morris /Somerset/Union) and Leonard Lance (R-Warren/Hunterdon/Mercer), establishes the New Jersey William Carlos Williams Citation of Merit to be presented to a distinguished poet from New Jersey. Williams was a world-renowned poet and Pulitzer Prize winner who practiced medicine in his hometown of Rutherford, N. J. According to the bill, the recipient of the Citation of Merit shall be considered the poet laureate of the State of New Jersey for a period of two years. The poet laureate will receive an honorarium of \$10,000. The bill appropriates that amount from the General Fund to the Department of State.

The bill requires the poet laureate to engage in activities to promote and encourage poetry within the state and to give at least two public readings in the state each year of the two-year term.