

House Resolution 314

By: Representatives Campbell of the 35th, Cummings of the 39th, Jones of the 60th, Evans of the 57th, Willis of the 55th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and celebrating Chelsea Rathburn as the distinguished Poet Laureate of
2 Georgia; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Chelsea Rathburn has long been recognized by the citizens of this state for her
4 critically acclaimed poetry and creative collections, having been appointed as Poet Laureate
5 of the State of Georgia in 2019 and serving as an ambassador for poetry and a champion of
6 the literary arts in Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, born in Jacksonville and raised in Miami, Florida, Chelsea Rathburn has deep
8 roots in the State of Georgia, where her mother's family has lived since the 1830s; and

9 WHEREAS, Rathburn holds a B.A. from Florida State University and an M.F.A. from the
10 University of Arkansas. Rathburn moved to Young Harris from Decatur, Georgia, where she
11 taught poetry workshops at Emory University and chaired the poetry track for the Decatur
12 Book Festival; and

13 WHEREAS, Chelsea Rathburn now lives in Young Harris, Georgia, with her husband, the
14 poet James Davis May, and their daughter; Chelsea Rathburn is currently an associate
15 professor of English-Creative Writing at Mercer University; and

16 WHEREAS, the position of Georgia's Poet Laureate was established in 1925. As the state's
17 Poet Laureate, Rathburn is an ambassador for the literary arts in Georgia, championing the
18 rich legacy of Georgia's writers both past and present and cultivating new audiences. She also
19 judges the Poet Laureate's Prize, an annual state-wide high school contest. In this role,
20 Rathburn serves every corner of the state, voicing the value of reading, writing, literacy, and
21 storytelling in the lives of every Georgian; and

22 WHEREAS, Chelsea Rathburn is the author of three poetry collections, *A Raft of Grief*
23 (2013), *The Shifting Line* (2005), and *Still Life with Mother and Knife* (2019), as well as the
24 winner of the 2005 Richard Wilbur Award. Her poems have been widely published in the
25 nation's top journals, including *Poetry*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *the New Republic*, *The*
26 *Southern Review*, *New England Review*, and *Ploughshares*, among others, while her prose
27 has been published in the nation's most esteemed journals, including *Creative Nonfiction* and
28 *Ploughshares*. In 2009, she received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, in 2021, Rathburn received a Poets Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of
31 American Poets to implement Georgia Poetry in the Parks, poetry trails featuring poems by
32 contemporary Georgia poets, in partnership with the Georgia Center for the Book and the
33 DeKalb Library Foundation; and

34 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this
35 remarkable, dedicated, and distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
37 the members of this body recognize and celebrate Chelsea Rathburn as the Poet Laureate of

38 Georgia as well as extend to her their most sincere wishes for continued success and
39 happiness.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
41 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to
42 Chelsea Rathburn.