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## New Jerseyans seeks to oust poet laureate.

**By Max Gross, Forward, 4 October 2002.  
English Language.**

Just about everyone in New Jersey wants to fire state poet laureate Amiri Baraka, but nobody knows how.

Call it poetic license.

Last week Governor James McGreevey called for the resignation of Baraka, a 68-year-old poet, playwright and activist who gained fame in the 1960s as LeRoi Jones, after he recited a poem accusing Israel of having advance knowledge of the September 11th attacks. When Baraka refused to resign, and the governor's office acknowledged that it lacked the authority to remove him from from the \$5,000-a-year, two-year post, New Jersey officials were left scrambling for a way to push him out.

A spokesman for the New Jersey Council of the Arts said that is was in the hands of the body that nominated Baraka—the nonprofit, non-state-affiliated New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

According to Gerald Stern, Baraka's predecessor as poet laureate of New Jersey, the law creating the poet laureate of New Jersey was drafted without provisos for how to dismiss one. "It never occurred to them that they might have to fire one," Stern, who served on the committee that recommended Baraka, told the Forward.

"One thing I do know is that there is nothing in the legislation for us to remove him," said Jim Haba, who serves on the committee of the New Jersey Council of the Humanities, which recommended Baraka as poet laureate earlier this year. "There's nothing that we as a committee can do."

That's not enough for the Anti-Defamation League, whose local director said the organization has spent years seeking the removal of individual officials who uttered racist or anti-Semitic remarks. "Look, these situations don't resolve themselves within 48 hours," said Shai Goldstein, director of ADL's New Jersey office.

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