

2022 Create the Vote Candidate Survey

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on Arts and Culture in advance of the 2022 election. We'll post your responses on our website so that voters can make informed decisions about who will best represent the Arts and Culture community at the legislature.

We ask that you complete the survey by Friday, September 23rd. **We know your time is limited so we understand that your responses will be brief.**

Don't miss out on this important opportunity to be an Arts champion!

Email *

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Please share your name

Amy Morrin Bello

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative, 28th district

Every town in Connecticut can boast cultural assets that contribute to a vibrant community and improve the quality of life for its residents.

What are some exciting arts and cultural events and organizations that you have experienced in your community?

Wethersfield has a wonderful Historical Society, the Webb Deane Stevens Museum, and the Wethersfield Art League. We have recently been designated a Cultural District! Each host events throughout the year including concerts, performances, lectures and exhibits. Wethersfield also had Times Fool Theater Company perform Macbeth outdoors and the Kycia Farm committee hosted two outdoor concerts on the property.

If elected, will you work to strengthen the arts and culture community in the town(s) you serve? If so, how? If not, why?

Yes. Wethersfield has a great partnership between their vibrant cultural entities, the town and the state. I look forward to supporting the work and the newly formed Cultural District.

Sandwiched between Boston and New York, Connecticut is often dismissed as a “pass through” state when it comes to tourism. Yet, our state has many world class arts institutions and a rich cultural landscape.

Why do you think arts and culture are important in Connecticut? What is unique about our state's arts and culture?

CT's rich history and home to some of American greats increase the state's prominence. We are lucky to be nestled between to wonderful cities and use our strategic location to entice visitors to our attractions include beach areas and farms as well as art and cultural destinations.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people discovered that arts and creativity play a critical role in helping us cope with emotional stress and sustain our mental health. Art helped us process loss, fight loneliness, stay connected and feel hopeful.

Can you share a way that the arts have helped you, your family or your community get through the difficult times of Covid? How will that experience influence choices about the arts you would make as a legislator?

Many of us struggled during the pandemic and a loved one found help through online art therapy. We, as a family and a community, enjoyed taking part in the virtual tours that many museums and historical buildings offered during the pandemic. We were able to see places that we may never have the opportunity to travel to.

The arts and creativity have a proven track record of economic benefit to our state.

The National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Research & Analysis and the Bureau of Economic Analysis report that, in 2020, arts and cultural production in Connecticut added \$8.9 billion to our economy and accounted for 3.2 percent of our gross state product, while the arts and cultural industries employed 49,159 workers with wages and benefits totaling more than \$5.1 billion. (https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/)

Despite these contributions, the arts have historically been first on the chopping block when it comes to budget priorities. What would you do to help keep arts and creativity funded in our state at a level that recognizes their economic importance?

We need to realize the value that the arts provide in our lives and the economic impact it has on our state. It takes conscious effort to realize the need to properly fund our arts so that that impact continues.

Connecticut has not had an Arts Education Specialist at the State Department of Education (SDE) since 2016, when the last specialist left. This position is critical to assuring that our State and National Arts Education Standards are consistently implemented in all of Connecticut's school districts, especially those in under-resourced communities where students' access to the Arts is often extremely limited compared to affluent communities.

If elected, would you support refilling the Arts Education Specialist at SDE? If not, why?

Yes, I would support filling this position.

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