

# 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 \*

cgreen4senate@gmail.com

Please share your name

Chris Green

What office and district are you a candidate for?

CT State Senate District 21

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?*

Stratford has its own Arts Alliance, they host art galleries, virtual portrait sessions, plein air events, Stratford hosts Make Music as well as a summer music series. Shelton has many summer music events. Shelton has an Arts League, that hosts art events and classes. Seymour has a Culture and Arts Commission that hosts mostly music events.

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

I would certainly hope to amplify the efforts of local organizations to host these events by attending and advertising arts and cultural events where possible. I would fight for grants funding initiatives to enhance and expand these events- in particular I'd love to see something happen with Shakespeare Park in Stratford- site of the former Shakespeare Theatre.

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?*

As a Kid Growing up in Central CT I always enjoyed the Wadsworth Atheneum and Mark Twain house. I've been delighted to find out how many awesome museums and exhibits are in District 21 as well: We have our own African American History Museum, Aerospace Museum, Helicopter Museum, Veterans Museum, and Boothe Park. For me the underdeveloped cultural location in the district is the Shakespeare Park site in Stratford.

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?*

I've really enjoyed the many local outdoor markets that we have across the district filled with local vendors. I do wish these events were supplemented with more interactive experiences, games and educational components as I think that would be a way to further boost community engagement in the events as well as the impact of the events.

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/](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?*

I would look to work with local leaders of our arts and culture ecosystem to understand their needs and prioritize fighting for grants and other support that will help to sustain and maximize the impact of their efforts.

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. It is disappointing to see that arts and music are too often squeezed out of public education budgets. Restoring this position would be a step in the right direction.

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