

# 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 \*

denisemcnairfor2022@gmail.com

Please share your name

Denise McNair

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative for the 30th 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?*

I have attended performances of the Connecticut Cabaret Theater which was based in Berlin. I have also attended many plays put on by the local high schools.

*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 work to strengthen the arts in both Southington and Berlin. Southington has a very vibrant Community Cultural Arts Center as well as the Barnes Museum and I would work with them to secure necessary funding for future improvements, etc. I would also like to work to increase funding for the Berlin Historical Society which does a wonderful job in documenting our past.

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?*

Arts and culture are vital to our overall sense of humanity. Our state is unique in that we have a long tradition of blending our shoreline with our cities and using the shoreline area to attract people from all parts of the country.

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?*

One very vivid memory of how the arts helped during the pandemic was the first Easter in 2020 when the world was locked down. Andrea Bocelli live-streamed a concert from Milan, Italy and the sense of peace was most powerful. My husband and I watched the concert while dining away from our family and while nothing could replace having family together, the concert was still quite special and moving and helpful.

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?*

The easiest place to chop when it comes to budgets seems to always be the arts or the libraries. I would argue that the time is over for that method of budgeting and would work to insure funding for the arts.

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 .....

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