

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

Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman

What office and district are you a candidate for?

Senate District 30

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?

The 30th Senate District is full of art. From the local carver, to professional gallery showings. Art is all around and the Litchfield Hills doesn't disappoint. I've been fortunate to have attended events in the district since my teenager years. My first experience was as a Greater Hartford Arts Academy student, we were invited to see a dance troop. I wasn't particularly excited at the ripe age of fourteen, exhausted by all things dance. At that time my older sister was well into her semi-professional dance career. Touring internationally with the Hartford Ballet, with serious conversations of Juilliard. But after seeing the Washington CT based dance group Pilobolus my option was transformed. Seeing how they pushed their bodies to new limits, how we as people are not stuck to any one interpretation was enlightening. Nearly twenty years later I am fortunate to be a stones throw from Washington and other amazing artist. I frequent the art festivals, gallery openings and shows in my community.

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

Arts expands thought, helps heal and build bridges. I will most certainly defend and expand funding for the Arts for our Artist community as well as our schools. I'd also like to highlight that a good majority of commerce in my district is tourism. Having a vibrant art community allows for a more thriving and robust economy.

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?

Our Arts are accessible. We have high quality artistic institutions with out the NYC price tag. Because Connecticut doesn’t have a city bigger than 150,000 people the degree of overhead cost on advertisements or maintenance of facilities is considerably lower than in Boston or New York City. Each institution strives to pay the artist competitive salaries as well as supporting their infrastructure but a regularly priced ticket for a show here is much more accessible than in either state. We also are a test ground for shows with internationally artist and directors coming to call Connecticut their home. Litchfield Hills being part of that conversation.

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?

Like art often does it helps to heal. I like many had sick family members. Some fighting for their lives. I was very fortunate that I didn’t lose anyone but the arts allowed for much needed mental respite from the despair of this pandemic. Now arts for me is working as a reflection, a mirror to who we are and we’re humanity should go as a whole.

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?

I've seen this firsthand. I formerly served on the Hartbeat Ensemble Board for a over five years. It's a professional theater that is small but mighty that supports original pieces of work like "Jimmy & Lorraine". While on the board we often struggled with balancing our budget. Expecting a certain amount of state funding for the theaters educational program but being at the whim of legislators. Artist and non-profits supporting the arts should not have to scrambling to to keep the lights on.

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, for all the reason stated in the previous questions. With Connecticut being the 8th in the nation of young people staying here and or relocating here I can speak from a place of knowledge WE WANT THE ARTS! Creating places of familiarity and inclusivity means art is also present.

This form was created inside of ctartsalliance.org.

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