

# 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

Farley Santos

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative -109th 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?*

Danbury is fortunate to have a culturally diverse community. My family and I have enjoyed many events and even have been a part of events from cultural festivals to art shows. I have attended events organized by the Cultural Alliance, the Danbury Music Center, the Danbury Museum and Historical Society, the Portuguese Cultural Center, the Greater Danbury Ecuadorian Cultural Center, and more.

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

Absolutely. Arts and cultures are important for a forward-looking and inclusive community and are a huge economic driver.

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?*

I think our state's arts and culture can be a tourist attraction from throughout the world and country if only we invest in them wisely. One of the reasons why CT is so unique is because we've welcomed people from diverse backgrounds which creates a tremendous opportunity for more arts and cultures in our state.

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?*

My wife, daughter, and I benefitted from our local arts and cultures here in Danbury throughout the pandemic as a learning tool and as a coping method. The value of arts and cultures within our community was heightened during COVID and as a State Representative, I will explore ways to better fund and showcase arts and cultures in our state.

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?*

Being an advocate for arts and culture along with exploring ways to better fund this industry is important to me. It is a high economic draw for the state and we must support it more.

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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