

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 *

coleyforconnecticut@gmail.com

Please share your name

Francis Rexford Cooley

What office and district are you a candidate for?

CT 22nd House 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?

The Witches Dungeon is now in Plainville. Just outside the 22nd District are the New Britain Museum of American Art, the Hillstead Museum in Farmington, Carousel Museum, American Clock and Watch Museum in Bristol. All have great art and cultural events throughout the year.

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

As a former Dean of the College at Paier College of Art I strongly support the arts.

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?

The Wadsworth and NBMAA give the Htfd/NB area a world class collection of art and in concert with other greater Hartford collections should be promoted to bring tourists into the area. Similarly the Museums at Yale is an asset to promote NH, the Aldrich and Weir Farm for the Ridgefield area.

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 hiked and posted an image a day on Facebook during the shutdown. STEAM is, educationally important and I will support as a legislator (I spent last year teaching art as a long term sub at NBHS).

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 would definitely support promoting CTs art institutions and museums in the state's tourism budget as well as STEAM in the Education budget.

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?

I support local control of education and curriculum.

This form was created inside of ctartsalliance.org.

Google Forms