

CREATE THE VOTE

An initiative of [Connecticut Arts Alliance](#)

2022 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE ARTS 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!

*****PLEASE SEND YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY TO brett@ctartsalliance.org*****

Your Name: Jill Barry

What office and district are you a candidate for? State Representative/ District 31 (Glastonbury)

1. 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?

Your answer: I am very proud of my town. This past weekend, there was an Arts Festival on the Town Green (sponsored by Glastonbury Arts Council), also an authors stage (hosted by a local bookstore). Our community thrives on theatrical performances year-round hosted by the schools and Youth and Family Services. They are attended by all and not just by the parents, which to me is a huge accomplishment! Our local library, which was recently renovated to include more creative areas including MAKER space. Our new poet laureate has started placing banners with favorite poem verses throughout the Town Center. We have museums throughout Town that details the history of our town.

If elected, will you work to strengthen the arts and culture community in the town(s) you serve? If so, how?

Your answer: If elected, one of the things that I would like to focus on is the history of Glastonbury and how arts and culture shaped our Town. One of my greatest interests in Native American culture, in which Glastonbury has a rich history.

2. 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?

Your answer: Yes! I love NYC and Boston however, there is no need to go to Broadway to see a play when we have fine theaters and museums right here in CT! There are so many cultural opportunities within a short distance in any direction. I think CT has a lot to offer young professionals, families and the elderly - whatever brings you here, culture will keep you here.

3. 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. They 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?

Your answer: During COVID and Zoom school, teachers had to get creative with their assignments. My children were taking a plethora of arts based classes. Each week, we would pick up an art kit to complete a sculpture project. We were given recipes to follow for different types of foods. We learned interesting things, like napkin folding and how to build a roller coaster. We came up with inventions. I say we because it was a family affair doing the cool projects. My takeaway would be the importance of art and culture based classes in schools. We had so much fun, used our creativity (a challenge being stuck in the house for months), learned a lot and gained appreciation for these non-traditional classes. Also, kudos to the teachers who thought of these amazing projects!

4. 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 importance as an economic driver?

Your answer: I think the biggest reason to advocate for the arts is to keep people here, young and old. We need to have "something cool to do" and the arts provide an excellent avenue for that. Similar to sports, big theater events or museum exhibits have the ability of getting people engaged, out and about and stimulates the local economy (dinner, drinks, a *night out*). It is crucial to support a constant flow of events to keep people engaged.

5. 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?

Your answer: Yes.