

# 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](mailto:brett@ctartsalliance.org)\*\*\***

Your Name:

What office and district are you a candidate for? CT House Rep District 34

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:**

The East Haddam Arts League , The I-Park artists-in-residence programs, Music on the River, The East Haddam Land Trust annual Musical Bridges concert. We also have the Goodspeed Opera performances. A student art show at Hale-Ray High School. Book signing at local library and at a popular cafe. I support local artists by purchasing their work. I have contributed articles and poetry to our local newspaper. My wife is a painter and sculptor and I assist and participate in her exhibits. Just the other day I was attending a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce held in a library. On the walls were multi-media portraits of marginalized community members by a well know artist.

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

**Your answer:** Absolutely. First, by making myself available to all arts organizations to discuss their financial and other material needs. Also, by attending as many of the district arts and cultural events as possible. Finally, by contributing my own work at events as a local writer and author of five books.

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? Arts and culture reflect our history and current collective life.*

**Your answer:** They are an essential thread of our character and purpose and embody that particular identity most necessary for thriving and surviving.

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:** I had the leisure to write and revise several books during Covid. My wife painted and sculpted. We also enjoyed the works which were generously shared by many artists and musicians the world over. It reminds me that art is universal, a special kind of gift, and forums of expression arise spontaneously out of the times. I will keep a very open mind in viewing the possibilities for the arts as a legislator.

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/](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 would fund them in every field to levels commensurate with their great value across the spectrum of benefits.

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. Absolutely. I would also apply the statutory REIS (Racial and Ethnic Impact Statement) process to every piece of legislation bearing on education, and especially for the inclusion of program in the ARTs in under-resourced communities.