

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: John Piscopo

What office and district are you a candidate for? 76th House district

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'm fortunate because the Towns in my District have abundant arts and cultural events. All towns offer free summer music concerts all summer. My hometown (Thomaston) is home to the Thomaston Opera House, which offers an ongoing schedule of exemplary community theater. I serve on the board that runs the theatre. Harwinton Library has ongoing art exhibits at the gallery in the library. Burlington has an art and Jazz show coming up this weekend. Litchfield is always offer music, movies, and art everywhere including an annual event on the green.

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

Your answer: If re-elected I will continue to support funding of the arts, and art infrastructure as the Ranking Member of the Bonding sub-committee.

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: Arts and Culture art the soul of a community. It is important to the economic and overall quality of life of any community.

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: Pat (my wife) and I went to many outdoor events during the pandemic. We always had a great time and felt happy that we went.

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 have always advocated for the economic reality that the arts and cultural events bring to the community. I will continue that advocacy in the future.

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: It is unfortunate if local systems ignore art education. The local boards should be made to answer that void. With the influx of magnet schools a child can attend an arts magnet if parents feel they will miss it in their hometown school.