

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

Kara Rochelle

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative, 104th 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 Valley Arts Council has a gallery on Main Street in Ansonia and hosts workshops throughout the year. The Derby Historical Society also hosts a variety of events to highlight the rich history and figures of this region. We also have a variety of community fairs and festivals throughout the year, including the Harvest Fest in Ansonia, which attracts tens of thousands annually.

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! I would like to see more investment in public art, murals and small public art projects. I'd also like to see an expanded community music series and more to feature local talent.

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?

Art is what gives a state soul. I think we have all the talent without the pretension, and our state gives artists the opportunity to rise more quickly in prominence. Since it is less competitive than say, New York, artists can more freely create without those pressures and that has helped produce a thriving scene in locations like New Haven.

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?

Music and art has always been an integral part of my life and has helped me through a great many challenges. During COVID, I created special playlists for certain endeavors to help the community that kept me motivated, as an example. And I know that outdoor music events has helped to re-socialize people and help build community in the wake of the social isolation of the past few years. I have been and will continue to be a strong supporter of arts funding and art initiatives that will inspire communities.

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 am a member of the Arts & Tourism caucus in the legislature and will continue to be an advocate for ensuring its funding for our communities and our schools as well.

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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