

# 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 \*

kdunnmc@aol.com

Please share your name

Kathleen McCarty

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative 38th 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?*

Attendance at Eugene O'Neill Theater, plays, cabaret, festivals, art and cultural events at the Waterford Historical Society, Summer nights at Harkness, Mohegan Sun concerts, and Town of Waterford concerts at the beach.

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

Yes. Since first elected in 2014, I have been a strong advocate for protecting arts and culture. As a member of the Appropriations committee, I will stay steadfast in my commitment to the arts. Arts and culture are such an integral part of my district. The arts are instrumental in creating a vibrant and healing community as well as contributing to the economic growth at the local and state levels

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?*

Connecticut should not be viewed as a pass through state. It has some of the best theaters, some with international acclaim, oldest and most historical museums in the nation highlighting the rich history and cultural heritage of the state. The arts and culture industry definitely drive tourism to the state of CT.

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?*

The power of the arts to heal is undeniable. The arts helped my family escape the emotional stress of Covid as they transported us even for a short while to another realm offering a reprieve from the pandemic. As a legislator, I would like to continue to promote the power of healing through art. The arts help us to connect to one another in so many ways. I am interested in art therapy in trauma healing and improving mental health for our students. I brought the concept of arts and healing up at one of the Tourism Arts and Culture meetings last session and I would like to work with my colleagues and education stakeholders on this topic.

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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 economic importance?*

The impact of the nonprofits arts and cultural organizations contribute significantly to the state's economy as noted above. I will continue to remind my colleagues that the arts and culture sector of tourism brings hundreds of millions of dollars of economic activity to to the state. The investment that the state makes in arts and culture pays for itself. This message needs to be repeated consistently,

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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?*

As the ranking member on the education committee, and someone who values the Arts wholeheartedly, I think this is a conversation worth having. Many of our students are in need of healing after periods of isolation from their peers in social settings during the past few years of Covid. Enhancing the arts and working to ensure that arts standards are implemented consistently throughout all of Connecticut's school districts seems like a laudable goal.

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