

# 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 \*

kerryawood@gmail.com

Please share your name

Kerry Wood

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Rep District 29

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?*

Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill Historical Society, Webb Deane Stevens Museum, Wethersfield Historical Society, Porchfest, Navratri Garba (Indian cultural dance), Scarecrows on Main, Holidays on Main, Bikes on Main

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*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, I see first hand how art (scarecrows, decorated bikes) brings people together to celebrate beauty, learn from the displays, and spend time with family. They are often supporting locals businesses while doing so.

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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?*

We do not have cities like Boston and New York so our arts and cultural attractions are completely different than those in urban settings. We spend more time making historic connections in our presentations, we link to the community better. Our strength is promoting our local heroes and artists. We are more organic in our celebrations and presentations.

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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?*

In Rocky Hill and Wethersfield, we are lucky to have many walking and biking trails. During COVID, people created their own natural art by making structures out of branches, leaving motivational messages on the trail, cleaning up areas that were long overgrown, and posting these sites and messages on social media. This encouraged other people to get outside and experience people and art in a safe yet social way. Inspiring people through good work and place making is important for people to express themselves. It's a healthy activity that we should be encouraging as legislators through open space preservation and the integration of arts in the outdoors.

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?*

We put money into the hands of theaters, entertainment venues, museums, and cultural places to stay open during the pandemic. We led by example that having these places fail is not a priority here in CT.

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, it's an important position and perspective to have in our educational decisions.

This form was created inside of ctartsalliance.org.

Google Forms