

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

Lucy Dathan

What office and district are you a candidate for?

State Representative, District 142

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?

We are so lucky in Fairfield County to have so much access, in particular, in Norwalk where we have so many amazing organizations that appeal to all ages. Some of my favorites are the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, the Lockwood Matthews Mansion, Silvermine Arts Center, the Norwalk Arts Center, Shakespeare on the Sound and The Maritime Aquarium. My favorite spot in New Canaan is the Historical Society, which does very interesting programs, like this summer, where they displayed wedding dresses through the ages.

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

I have been a large supporter of the arts and culture throughout our state as the Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee. I sit on the DECD sub committee and I have been advocating for additional funding for the amazing cultural assets that we have in the state. I endeavor to attend the many events that the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County puts on.

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 has a deep rooted history that is unique to our neighboring states, People want to stay in their communities to experience theater, music or local artists' exhibits. The arts supports our local restaurants as well as bolster local tourism with exhibits with this uniqueness.

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?

I did join some of the virtual events that highlighted local musicians that were so comforting to the soul and offered a sense of belonging to a group. I believe that this new way of thinking with these virtual events, will be a great way to keep people who may be housebound due to age, an illness or a disability, the opportunity to experience the arts and culture. This will help many retain the feeling of belonging and engaging their minds. I will be asking the arts and cultural organizations that come before Appropriations, how they will ensure that their programming is inclusive to all members of society.

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 will continue to advocate for funding within the DECD subcommittee of Appropriations as we have seen a direct return on the investment by the state (ROI) to our local communities through the increase in jobs and tourism revenues. I thinking highlighting these metrics are very important to illustrate the economic drivers of the arts is to our state.

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?

I would support refilling this essential role. I know during COVID, the free summer programs have been essential to our youth, not just for the learning opportunities but also for the mental health needs of our young residents. Having a central co-ordination effort will ensure that the youth programming helps every community with both of these goals to build the best and the brightest adults of tomorrow.

This form was created inside of ctartsalliance.org.

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