

# 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](mailto:brett@ctartsalliance.org)\*\*\***

Your Name: Tim Ackert

What office and district are you a candidate for? 8th

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:** One of the newest is our Coventry Arts on Main Street. I have been active and a financial supporter of the event that has many of the arts involved. Also we have a Coventry Arts Guild I am very proud of in Coventry. In Tolland we have the Arts of Tolland center right on the town green and they are very active. One Artist I hgave been active with is the David Hayes Sculpture Garden on South Street in Coventry.

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

**Your answer:** I believe the most impactful way is to be visibly supportive of the art programs in our communities. Also if time allows be active with them. Of course funding is high on the list to support the arts whether through grant opportunities or private and public funding.

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:** Connecticut has a deep history of the Arts going back to the 1700 with John Trumbull from Lebanon CT to more current Sol Le Witt from Hartford. I also believe CT is very strong in the performing arts and it is an attraction when visiting CT. Also CT has diverse communities and we get to see many different cultures arts.

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:** In CT also has I have found that the pandemic brought out the artist in many people. They found themselves struggling with isolation and they turned to the arts. Whether they picked up an instrument or a brush to fill a need of self preservation. A need to be positively productive for their soul. In my neighborhood my neighbor would bring his piano out the circle and just play for us. As a legislator I need to listen to the those directly involved and see how to be supportive and remove and obstacles to grow the arts in CT.

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/](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:** We have struggled with budgets over the years and unfortunately have had to make tough choices in spending. What needs to be considered when making these choices is do the investment in arts have a return on investment. The answer on multiple levels is yes. First the billions of dollars added to our economy and also human factor of what the arts add. Coupling investment in Arts and Tourism would be beneficial for CT and our local economy.

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:** I was not aware that the position was not refilled. I am curious if the position is just vacant or has been eliminated by SDE. If the position exists I believe it should be refilled. If SDE does not have a position maybe it could be done as DECD position.