

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*****

Your Name: David Michel

What office and district are you a candidate for? State Rep of the 146th

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: Not enough. We lost our Franklin Street Works where I used to go and attend art exhibits. With so few art galleries, losing one prominent one in Stamford was a major hit in my humble opinion

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

Your answer: I will support, co sponsor, co introduce any legislation to strengthen the arts and culture in the state working with partner legislators and advocacy groups, artists and the CAA

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: We have history in our state, and there are books on places to visit in CT, but i do not believe art and culture have been treated at the level they should by us at the state.

We have amazing nature and wildlife and instead of boosting our eco-tourism like NJ s proficient tourism, we let DEEP control an "against-the-peoples-will" rhetoric to push for hunting of wildlife, including black bears that are keystone species and maintain healthy forest soils. The divide between deep and actual natural stewardship is far and wide.

We can have eco tourism in the water as long as we protect the biodiversity there. At times art and nature can mix and be very soothing to people.

Boosting the arts in the state is another effort to support mental health.

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: Ha just typed up on mental health. My mother plays 13 instruments of music and besides a French teacher in French schools taught music. My mother paints on several mediums, silk, watercolor, etc and has exhibited her paintings along with my photography. My mother won prizes directing "chorals", Choruses and canons for the Loire Region (including 1st place) with her students. I grew up in a very artistic household.

I used to paint, as a kid, on silk (w guta of course), and watercolor. I played violin piano and djembe, and also at some point put together a Reggae band while back in St

Etienne in France with the most established local musicians for which I composed and sang. This was "eons" ago unfortunately.

I understand the personal value of the arts, how they help people escape a non forgiving world by simply listening or watching. Through our senses we can raise curiosity, achieve satisfaction, we can construct a feeling of comfort or excitement using the arts. It is a key part of the fight for mental health.

As you mention in the question, it helps process many emotions..particularly in difficult times, they can bring some good feelings.

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/)

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: As my committees of cognizance are environment, planning & development, and transportation, i would be happy continuing to work w the arts and tourism caucus of which i am a part of, to ensure we can help new tourism while promoting wildlife viewing. But what follows are ideas i d be happy to share.

We need to promote the arts in our education system more. We d have more art across the state. When we have mega structures being constructed and placed maybe we can have some programs promoting arts and culture.

Its just a crazy idea..but i believe there is something there.

I will be happy to look into promoting arts in CT on our commuter transportation systems..maybe we can talk about a campaign. There should be grants available from the state to give to artists to work on projects across the state.

We need to promote art galleries in areas that might not have much retail or struggling retail to bring people and help develop surrounding retail.

I am also not going to pretend to reinvent the wheel and am all ears as to what the CAA would propose.

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: Yes, we need to ensure there is plenty music options and arts and crafts (painting) in schools for students to learn and grow with. It opens more opportunities in many ways to our youth, our future.