

# 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 \*

ihaines20@gmail.com

Please share your name

irene Haines

What office and district are you a candidate for?

34th District State Rep

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?*

Most recently, I organized the East Haddam Sidewalk Arts Festival. I regularly attend functions at iPark. I just went to the Van Gogh. I also play viola and perform the the Community Music School in Centerbrook. Have played in pit orchestras locally as well.

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

Of course. I am a member of the Tourism Caucus up in Hartford and one of our chief areas of interest is the arts!

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?*

I think the best and unique aspect of our region is that it’s so diverse in its art and culture offerings and much of it is grassroots initiatives. They begin with an idea and a vision. And because it’s so welcomed I do believe it has thrived. We just need to get the word out more about it.

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?*

Epoch Arts in East Hampton is a student led arts initiative. They did a tremendous job during COVID running events and classes and help keep kids engaged. My daughter, an orchestra director for Farmington High School ran classes virtually and it was when kids were most sane and smiling. The Arts community pivoted and made it work as best they could. I always have the arts in mind and look for ways we can continue the focus on enabling this sector

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?*

Through the tourism caucus is, in my opinion, the best way to get this done. The reason for that is that it already has influence and we can piggyback on the recognition tourism has already. COVID funds were given to many arts organizations so that proves that the state recognizes this.

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 did not know we had an arts education specialist in CT. I think we need to bring unified arts back in our schools, for the arts, for trades, so much that our students miss. Funding has to come first. But if we can permanently fund it, that would be great.

This form was created inside of [ctartsalliance.org](https://ctartsalliance.org).

Google Forms