

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

Karen Reddington-Hughes

What office and district are you a candidate for?

House District 66

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?

The Community Theater at Woodbury, the Earth Day Celebration in the Hollow, the Ct Summer Opera Foundation, Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust, the Glebe House Museum and Gertrude Jekyll Gardens, the Hurd House Museum, Hogpen Hill Farms Sculpture Park, Woodbury-Bethlehem Community Music Foundation, the Woodbury CT Chamber of Commerce.

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 will continue to be engaged with the organizations that I have been for over 20 years. Presently I am the President of the Chamber of Commerce, on the board of and one of the founders of the Ct Summer Opera Foundation, member of the Flanders Nature Center Art Committee, corresponding secretary of the Woodbury Jr. Women's Club, President of the Woodbury Ct Antiques Dealers Association, and a second term Selectman for the Town of Woodbury. I am also a Representative for the State of Ct Regional Tourism - I will continue to assist in the marketing of what we have to offer and introduce new residents to the organizations that may be a great fit for their talents and volunteer opportunities. In addition to this I am a business owner of Abrash Galleries that I have had for 18 years.

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?

Arts and culture are very important to Ct and there are some real hidden treasures. Some Museums that we have are the Glebe House Museum in Woodbury which is where the Episcopal Church in America was founded, the Tapping Reeve House in Litchfield, Ct is the home of the first law school. Ct was home to many artists that later became quite famous including Alexander Calder in Roxbury, Kay Sage from Woodbury, Ct and composer Leroy Anderson from Woodbury, Ct.

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?

During Covid hiking and rediscovering the beauty of the natural trail system in Woodbury and the surrounding towns was tremendously helpful. It provided a peaceful way to stay physically healthy and enjoy the beauty of New England. I think that this brought to light the importance of keeping trails and nature preserves in good shape and believe that improvements have been implemented in many parks as a result and will continue to be.

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?

Perhaps finding a way to measure the financial impact of arts in the local towns as well as cities would reinforce their importance to the economy. It is always easier to justify the continuation of a program when the benefits are financially well defined.

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 want to know where the funding was coming from before , and why the decision had been made to eliminate the position. How are the State and National Arts Education standards being measured today?

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Google Forms