

CREATE THE VOTE

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. Candidates who choose not to participate by that date will be tagged "no response." **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*****

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: Live music at Roger Sherman park, Young Artists Philharmonic, Ballet shows and piano recitals at the Greenwich Arts Council building, Friends' art shows at the Arts Council, and events at the Greenwich Historical Society, where I serve on the Collections Committee. I very much want to attend Greenwich Symphony concert, also.

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

Your answer: Yes. The arts are integral parts of the human experience in a civil society. Art as drawing, as performance, as music, and more helps us understand our world and often bridges gaps to help knit us together in a fabric we call "community". For the most part, I've been involved as a private citizen and supporter. I would like to better understand the needs of Greenwich and Stamford's arts sector, especially as it recovers from the impact of cancellations due to COVID, and do what I can to help as a legislator. I would respectfully err on the side of government having a light touch with laws or policy re: the arts.

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: The uniqueness of the arts and culture of Connecticut is due to our history as one of the oldest states in the union. Our history is filled with such enterprising and creative people who were founders of our country and the spirit of America. The fact that we don’t have county government means we have a strong identity with our towns and small cities, which keeps alive the uniqueness of Connecticut. All one needs to do is get off the highway. Any road will lead you to a historic, rich, cultural discovery in Connecticut!!

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: COVID was a very tough time...I do not support the mass forced closure of businesses and schools, which was then followed by unprecedented levels of governmental spending that has created the inflationary pressures we are facing. From knocking on doors and meeting folks at their home, it is so clear how worried and stressed people are right now about their savings, covering all the rising costs and the insecurity of their jobs.

For my family with four school-aged children, we love books and we love to draw. The shutdowns of COVID were endured with more creative play at home with the children...

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: My vision for a Connecticut with sound economic policies so that government support for the arts can and should be more consistent and reliable. We need cost of living like energy, utilities, healthcare, and more to be much lower and the hard-working people of CT keeping more of their own earnings. This is about economic policies of reducing excessive regulations and taxes so that businesses can grow. I think artists can relate very much to entrepreneurs. Artists need creative freedom as much as business folks do. A government that is more limited in scope leaves the people with more of their own time, energy, and resources to support the arts and perhaps to even be artists themselves!

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 I would support an Arts Education Specialist at SDE. My expectation would be for this person to guide arts education in the whole of the state and go beyond the meeting of "standards". I hope they will shine a light on all the pursuits of the arts organically happening across our state and help us to all share in appreciating the richness of such endeavors.