

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

Mike Pace

What office and district are you a candidate for?

House Rep. 88th district

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?

Whitney Players is an organization I have contributed to throughout the years, for the production of their plays. I do enjoy live performances.

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 would help bolster the arts and culture experience in my district. That may be through state or federal funding. Promoting fund raising events. I feel it is important to offer that experience to members of our community especially the children. Arts and culture play a big role in finding out who we are and where our strengths lie, and can help us overcome adversities in life.

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?

The Arts serve as a great outlet for many people to express themselves, similar to sports. As well as serving as a positive influence and a powerful way to fight emotional stress. There are several museums in the state. I would often visit the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford and the Peabody Museum in New Haven, as well as the CT Science Center when the kids were younger. CT does have a good arts and culture scene.

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?

My son found art during the Covid-19 pandemic. Turns out he has a gifting in it. He has won an award for his ceramic work, but really enjoys acrylic painting. For his senior project he painted the art room wall at his school. A mural of 3 dimensional illusionary shapes and colors. This took him countless hours and continued until after graduation.

The arts hits home to me, as stated I would do what I can to encourage funding and promotion of the arts and culture.

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?

With numbers like these it would seem as though the arts do not pose much of a threat to negatively effecting our economy, and our tax base, in fact it may bolster it. When it comes to voting on such legislation I would like to think I would support its funding. The process of running as an elected official is very new to me, so it is hard to speak in absolutes. What I can say with confidence is that from my perspective the arts serve as an important piece to a well rounded positive community environment. Something CT could use.

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 be in support of refilling the position, if the position has proven to help keep the arts as playing a strong role in our under-resourced communities, and that the removal of the position has hurt those communities.

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