

CREATE THE OTE 2024

with CT ARTS ALLIANCE

2024 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE ARTS SURVEY

You Name: MJ Shannon

What office and district are you a candidate for?

Office: House District: 117

1. Do you have a connection to the arts? If so, please share.

I attended the Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) in New Haven part-time throughout all four years of high school. My time at ECA gave me the opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation for creative expression and its importance in fostering a well-rounded education. The arts have played a significant role in shaping who I am and my understanding of how creativity can inspire change and bring communities together.

2. Can you share an arts experience that has impacted your life or the lives of your family members?

The arts have had a strong impact on my life, especially in building my confidence. My theater training and involvement in the arts have shaped me into someone who is comfortable advocating for important issues and speaking up for others. Performing gave me the skills to communicate effectively, think creatively, and engage with different perspectives. These qualities have been extremely valuable in my personal and professional life. The arts have not only enriched my life but have also empowered me to be a strong, vocal advocate in my community.

- 3. The Connecticut legislature hosts the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Caucus, a bipartisan group of legislators who champion state support for the arts community.**

If elected (or re-elected), will you join (or rejoin) the Caucus?

Yes, if elected, I would join the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Caucus. I believe in the importance of supporting the arts community and recognize the significant role it plays in Connecticut's cultural and economic landscape. The arts enrich our communities, foster creativity, and bring people together, and I would be proud to advocate for continued state support.

- 4. Studies have shown that arts and culture can deliver a 3 to 1 return on investment at a minimum if adequately funded. Despite this, Connecticut has historically under invested state funds in the arts and lags the rest of the nation in recognizing that arts generate tax revenue and support a thriving economy.**

If elected (or re-elected), will you support increased investment of state funds in arts and culture?

Yes, I believe supporting increased investment in the arts is both a cultural priority and a smart economic strategy for Connecticut. By boosting state funding, we can ensure that the arts continue to flourish, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and improving the quality of life in our communities.

- 5. Are there any other ways that you'd like to convey to voters how you have been supportive of the arts?**

While I haven't performed in some time, I actively support the arts community in other ways. As a member of Milford Pride, I helped organize an art show this year to celebrate trans visibility, creating a platform for local artists to showcase their work. I also make it a point to attend various art events in my community, whether it's an art show or a live performance.

