

Georgia Arts Network Candidate Questions

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1. *Would you please share your personal involvement in arts and culture (such as being an artist/performer, attending various events, supporting a spouse/child as they pursue the arts, donating to local organizations, or other items that may be personal to you)?*

I am a media, technology, and entertainment attorney. I represent creatives – from filmmakers to musicians, from game developers to authors, from animators to visual artists. I support the Georgia Lawyers for the Arts, and have provided pro bono assistance to artists both through GLA, as well as through other organizations such as Visual Art Werks, Binders Art Supply and Nuci's Space. During my first legislative session I started an "Artist at the Capitol" exhibit series highlighting a different visual artist from my district area, displaying their work at my Capitol office and promoting the display and the artist via my various social media platforms. During 2013 and 2014 I co-hosted a series called "League of Art Entrepreneurs" with *Art is King* in Atlanta to teach visual artists entrepreneurial skills so they can continue to sustain themselves with what they love most to do – create art. When I am asked why I represent these clients and do the kind of law I do my answer is simply "Because I want a beautiful world" – artists give that to us – through their truth, expression, craft and art.

2. *According to the National Assembly of State Art Agencies FY2019 State Arts Agency Legislative Appropriation Preview, Georgia ranks 49th in per capita funding for our State Arts Agency. Do you believe that this is an appropriate level of investment? And why or why not?*

I believe that this is not just an inappropriate level but also a disgrace for Georgia to be ranked 49th out of 50. Art plays such a crucial role in our society. It documents history, it provides starting points for important public discourse, it provides a non-threatening perspective from which to examine ourselves and our world, it brings people together, it helps celebrate the good and serves to remind us of where we do not want to be again. It also gives the public a sense of pride in place, thereby improving citizens' respect for their environment and encouraging a community that engages with each other, reducing the fear of "other," which in turn reduces violent crime. Our allocation of resources reflects our priorities; support for the arts should be much higher priority.

3. *What are your goals for arts education in our public school systems?*

I would love to see us get to a point where funding is provided so we have a robust arts education curriculum integrated into each school and school system, as well as a broad variety of extra curricular options focusing on the arts.

4. *Do you support the statewide legalization of gaming at casino resorts?*

My support for this depends on actual language proposed for making gaming legal. Certain parameters must be put in place to protect the surrounding areas (especially if they are residential), as well as protection to prevent against and combat human trafficking that tends to occur near these areas.

Although there is sufficient evidence to see short-term, positive effects to the economy, the long-term effects have been shown to be more negative. For example, casinos when first opened may add jobs, but they don't actually increase wages or wealth of the workers or the community in the long run. There is also the concern that those who tend to frequent the casinos are those who should theoretically least be using them (the poor). In addition, most studies agree that casinos have a strong negative impact on surrounding property and real estate values as they don't actually increase crime rates, but the perception that they do is very high and very strongly believed by the community.

5. *According to industry consultant CSL's 2016 analysis of the Casino Impact on Performing Arts Venues, there is a negative impact on existing local arts and cultural entertainment venues when casino-owned and funded entertainment venues are constructed in the market? Were you aware of this detrimental consequence? Do you think these civic assets deserve formal protection?*

I was not aware of this analysis until you brought it to my attention. Having reviewed it and some additional research on the topic, I *do* think these civic assets deserve protection. I make it a point when I read legislation to look for any possible good intentions, but the language may provide certain loopholes or gaps that give the bill unintended harmful impacts.

6. *Other states that have legalized casino gambling have included language in the legislation to protect local arts and cultural facilities, including provisions to prohibit or limit the capacity of entertainment venues housed at casino resorts. Would you introduce protection for Georgia's arts and culture facilities? If so what would you propose?*

I would introduce, co-sign, and/or advocate for any legislation that protects, enhances and/or provides resources for Georgia's artists and existing non-casino arts and cultural facilities. I would need to do additional research as to what best practices are out there from states that have already passed similar legislation such as Massachusetts, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, so that gambling does not cannibalize existing venues in the performing arts.

<http://www.wbjournal.com/article/20180806/PRINTEDITION/308029996/new-casinos-bring-challenges-to-central-mass-tourism>