



Election 2018 Gubernatorial Candidate Survey

David Garcia
Arizona Governor
Party: Democrat

Contact Information

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Please rank each of the issues identified below according to how critical they are to building Arizona's future, by choosing a number from 1 to 5, as follows: 1 - Not At All Important, 2 - Not Very Important, 3 - Somewhat Important, 4 - Very Important, 5 - Extremely Important

Stimulating Arizona's economy and creating more good quality jobs.

5 - Extremely Important

Increased funding for K-12 schools.

5 - Extremely Important

Providing diverse opportunities for university and postsecondary education.

5 - Extremely Important

Protecting and stewarding Arizona's natural resources, e.g. air quality, water.

5 - Extremely Important

Preserving and promoting Arizona's unique cultural heritage and resources.

5 - Extremely Important

Leveraging Arizona arts as a means of community and economic development, attracting businesses and enriching education.

5 - Extremely Important

Please rank how effective the non-profit arts and culture sector is at supporting the following community priorities, by choosing a number from 1 to 5, as follows: 1 - Not At All Effective, 2 - Not Very Effective, 3 - Somewhat Effective, 4 - Very Effective, 5 - Extremely Effective

Supporting local community development, e.g. downtown revitalization, neighborhood redevelopment.

5 - Extremely Effective

Providing a well-rounded education for our K-12 students.

5 - Extremely Effective

Supporting local business and attracting and retaining new businesses.

5 - Extremely Effective

Encouraging tourism.

5 - Extremely Effective

Making Arizona a place citizens want to live and raise their families.

5 - Extremely Effective

Supporting community health by directing programs and services to groups such as veterans, seniors, young people, and the cognitively and physically challenged.

5 - Extremely Effective

Given the value of the nonprofit arts and culture sector to the state, how would you support the eventual restoration of funding for the Arizona Commission on the Arts to pre-recession levels?

- Return to a General Fund appropriation which is built into the budget base.
- Another dedicated funding stream. If so, what?: Since the Rainy Day Fund is specifically set aside for use in hard times, I would not want to make that an ongoing revenue stream. However, I believe that support for the arts is essential to our well being as a state, an economy, and as a people. After 10 years of starving state services through unnecessary corporate tax cuts, and cuts for the wealthiest Arizonans, I am the ONLY candidate to state the obvious: we need to repair the damage by raising revenue. Amid many other equally important and long ignored needs such as funding for education and infrastructure, it will be difficult to get voters to approve a ballot measure for the arts. As a result, I am committed to restoring arts funding to pre-recession levels through my budget and the General Fund. It is also worth noting that, through my active support for the Invest in ED ballot measure, I am helping to relieve pressure that has been put on the General Fund for far too long. And, finally, I would be proud and eager to work with members of the Commission to identify other funding streams, if necessary, and am open to making that funding permanent under statute.

As Governor, how would incorporate the Arizona Commission on the Arts into your efforts to promote and accomplish your vision for Arizona as an attractive place to live, do business, and raise a family, especially with respect to economic development, education, business development, and tourism?

I am tired of this Governor marketing our state as the “cheap” alternative for relocating businesses. Arizona is an amazing, beautiful place, and our vibrant arts community has to become a part of that conversation. Arizona is ranked 44th in arts funding per capita among states by a recent NASAA study. With the incredible blend of people and cultures we have here in Arizona, there is no reason that our state government should be this passive about funding their creative ventures. As Governor I will work with the Arts Commission to bring attention to flagship events that gain national attention and begin the important job of rebuilding a positive image for Arizona across the nation.

I will also end standardized testing in our public schools, so that we are no longer “teaching to the test” and art and music can retake their rightful place alongside subjects like math and science in the curriculum.

The plain truth is that states and cities that have successfully encouraged and promoted the arts have gone on to become economic powerhouses. Yet at the same time, these places (for instance, San Francisco and Austin) have created local enrichment and a sense of identity and community that strengthens them. This is my vision for Arizona.

To ensure all K-12 students have access to standards-based arts education and the benefits it can have on their academic performance and the overall learning environment, how would you encourage more attention and resources for arts education?

- Support audited reporting about arts education course offerings and student enrollment in any existing school "report card" or certificates of assurance required by state law.
- Credit in the A-F school report card for student participation and achievement in standards-based arts education.
- Establishment of a Fine Arts Seal -- similar to the Civics Literacy Seal -- to be affixed to the diplomas and noted in the transcripts of graduating students with advanced achievement in high school Fine Arts.
- Other ideas?: I am a vocal advocate for the importance of arts inclusion in every child's education, because I believe we must focus on the whole child. That is why one of the first things I will do when elected governor is get rid of standardized testing. "Teaching to the test" prepares no child for life in the workforce. In fact, it keeps them from being exposed to the breadth and width of their full potential. With more and more schools in Arizona lacking sufficient funding for all their programs, art and music are among the first to get diminished or even cut entirely. Over 100,000 students in Arizona do not have access to any form of art education. All kids should have the opportunity to be inspired by the arts, and we will insure Arizona school will have the funding to provide this opportunity to them.

Please discuss what impact you believe arts and culture has on your local community, e.g. individual artists, nonprofit performing arts, museums of various kinds, zoos or botanical gardens.

Arts and culture has an all-pervasive impact, and the name for it is Quality of Life. One of the things I say repeatedly during my public appearances is that Arizona is one of the worst states in which to be a kid. That's tragic, and as a parent, educator, and Arizona's next governor, it's my mission to change this situation. I will work to reduce the challenges our state faces in this regard—for instance, astronomical rates of childhood poverty, underfunded education, and poor access to healthcare. And on the other side of the ledger, I will fund the opportunities for enrichment that have been ignored for far too long—arts, culture, and access to open space and our incredible state parks system. We have a tremendous diversity of culture, and it needs to be celebrated, from the beauty of Arizona's 22 tribes and our large Mexican-American community, to the many other nationalities, ethnicities, and backgrounds that make up our state.

Please describe your personal participation and/or interest in arts and culture, e.g. professional or amateur visual or performing artist, a patron, board service, financial support, participation by your children, etc.

I will bring my passion for culture and the arts to the governor's office, because it's something my wife and I have made a central part of our family life for decades. We do this for ourselves, but also because we know how important it is in shaping the right environment for our two daughters. We are art collectors, season ticket holders at Gammage, voracious readers of poetry and literature, as well as patrons and supporters of organizations like the Latino Arts and Cultural Center, and Xico, Inc, which supports Latino and indigenous artists.

Sadly, I can't draw, paint or even cut paper in a straight line, yet I admire the people that can. That's why I served on a panel of judges for the Governor's Arts award and on the Arizona Humanities Council, where I worked to promote the Arizona Book Festival. I have also served on the board of the Arizona School for the Arts, where my oldest daughter, Lola, is a student. Both of my daughters are talented pianists and have attended camp at the Phoenix Center for the Arts and I'm proud to say that Lola is an official reviewer of young adult books for the Changing Hands bookstore.

Below are the gubernatorial candidates from whom Arizona Citizens for the Arts did not receive responses to our survey, along with their contact information. We encourage you to contact your candidates and ask them about their views on arts & culture in Arizona. A list of questions to ask candidates about the arts can be found on our VotesmART webpage under 'The Candidates'.

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