

Answers by - Tom Conroy Democratic Candidate for State Treasurer

Questions for State Treasurer Candidates:

(Note: Questions 1-3 can be answered with a yes or no, but please feel free to elaborate beyond a one word answer)

1. MALC has had a great working relationship with the last two Treasurers and their administrations. Would you continue this open door policy to MALC and by extension to the arts and creative economy communities?

Yes. I would continue the existing open-door policy between the Treasurer's office and MALC. As a state representative, I have been guided for the past eight years by core principles including availability, accessibility, and accountability. My door has been open to constituents via monthly office hours in the district, or daily at the State House. I have responded to over 8,000 emails and letters and fielded hundreds of phone calls. As a policy maker, I have always sought the perspectives of stakeholders from all sides of an issue. I will continue to be guided by these same principles and practices as the next State Treasurer—especially when it comes to the arts and creative communities.

I have always supported MALC's constituent groups, recognizing the valuable contributions they make to the district I represent and to the Massachusetts economy as a whole. I'm particularly aware of how important the burgeoning creative arts economy is in places such as western Massachusetts and Cape Cod. As the next State Treasurer, I would ensure that artists and the creative economy have open access to the Treasurer's office so we continue to promote mutually beneficial initiatives and policies and help these communities continue to grow and flourish.

2. The Treasurer's Office was one of the cofounders of the Annual Artist Under the Dome event at the State House and it remains one of its key supporters. If elected Treasurer, will you continue the office's support for this annual event?

Yes, I would continue and be supportive of this great annual event. Massachusetts should be a commonwealth where all residents have equal opportunities to work and succeed. Artists play an important role in the Massachusetts economy and we must continue to build upon existing relationships and ensure we are promoting policies and dedicating adequate funding to help Massachusetts artists continue to create and contribute.

3. MALC has been working to establish a disaster/emergency fund for artists of all disciplines that would be held/managed by the Treasurer's office. All funds would be

from outside sources, but in the case of a national disaster (ie Katrina/9/11 type of emergencies) it would allow for additional funding from the Federal government and/or other governmental/private sources to address the increased critical need.

I believe the disaster/emergency fund for artists is a great idea, and I would be supportive of it as the next Treasurer. On the campaign trail, I often discuss how the State Treasurer could should be act as the “People’s Banker,” offering low interest loans to Massachusetts high school graduates attending college (as an alternative to Wall Street banks’ offering the bulk of student loans, as is the case today). In a similar fashion, I would seek to fund initiatives such as this fund to ensure those most in need are able to access social safety-net services. In addition, I believe that the treasurer’s office, with its access to world-class investment expertise, is ideally suited to manage this type of fund.

4. Is there anything else you would like to share in regards to your policy and/or platforms that directly impacts artists of all disciplines and by extension the arts and creative economy communities?

Since becoming a state representative eight years ago, I have strongly supported the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and funding for it. Earlier this year, I joined many of my colleagues in successfully securing nearly \$1 million of increased funding for the MCC. This will allow the MCC to continue its great work with nonprofit organizations, local cultural councils, school and creative youth development programs, and new music and universal design initiatives.

I believe our children will be better prepared for an increasingly global society with a well-rounded, 21st century education, including an emphasis on creativity and design. Increasingly, the U.S. economy is growing because entrepreneurs are creating new products and designing new services, verses the repetitive assembly-line jobs that drove our economy in the past. That’s why we must continue to include education in the arts as part of our core curriculum. My wife and I have emphasized this with our four daughters, who excel as singers, actors, and musicians in school.

We can only adequately fund arts education over the long term if we dedicate sufficient resources to our cities and towns. As Treasurer, I will work with my colleagues in the legislature to ensure we are sending enough local aid back to our local communities to provide students all across the Commonwealth with a well-rounded, 21st-century education.