

Answers by - Deb Goldberg 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?

I will not only be supportive of the relationship between MALC and the Treasurer's office, I will actively work to strengthen it.

My family and I have a long history in supporting all areas of the arts. Governor Frank Sargent appointed my mother, Carol Goldberg, to Council for Arts and Humanities at its inception (known today as the Massachusetts Cultural Council), where she was instrumental in convincing the state legislature of the critical importance of the arts in education and in life.

Later, I became one of the founders and treasurer of Berkshire Hills Music Academy (BHMA) in South Hadley, MA. BHMA is a school for young adults with severe cognitive disabilities, including Williams Syndrome, Down Syndrome, and autism. The school teaches students life skills and vocations through music, and has been exceptionally successful in doing so. I was also on the board of Brookline Music School for fifteen years, and am now a member of the school's advisory committee.

I fundamentally believe that arts education supports all learning, and promotes intellectual stimulation and growth. It is often the first item cut in school budgets and yet it is proven that the arts enhance learning. This is something I have seen within my own son Evan. Evan was adopted and would never have had a music lesson. Yet in kindergarten, we discovered that he is a gifted jazz musician. Therefore, I understand the importance of arts on a deeply fundamental level. I believe all forms of arts contribute to the vitality of our state and people in countless ways.

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?

I will absolutely continue the tradition of supporting and co-hosting this wonderful event. It is so important to support the arts through our public institutions, and I would even be open to doing more events like this.

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.

The establishment of this fund is a very exciting idea, and I would enthusiastically welcome its management within the Treasurer's office. All forms of original art need to be protected from destruction, and artists also deserve support after such losses.

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?

As stated above, I am a strong supporter of Massachusetts artists and believe the Treasurer's office has an important role to play in working with groups like MALC and with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) to promote our state's creative economy. The Massachusetts Cultural Districts Initiative has been very successful in investing in artists and attracting tourists and tax revenue to communities across the Commonwealth, and we need to continue to support it. However, I also believe we should do more to support our artists.

For example, I am interested in exploring the possibility of applying tax-exempt status to handmade cultural products made in these Cultural Districts and am also interested in creating a cultural tax credit similar to the historic tax credit, in order to promote and incentivize developers to build art work/live spaces.

Policies like these could do a great deal to encourage the art economy in Massachusetts, which plays an important role in fostering economic development and financial stability in communities.

Finally, I am vehemently opposed to proposals made by the state legislature in the past to eliminate co-ops. The majority of co-ops are artist's own residences/studios, and these proposals would have eliminated them, harming an affordable and important option for the artist community.