

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE COALITION

For Immediate Release
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CANDIDATES MAKE STATEMENTS ON ARTS AND CULTURE

May 28, 2008 - As the City of San Diego Primary Election on June 3rd approaches and candidates talk about their opponents' position on arts and culture, voters have the option of reviewing the candidates' own words on the issue. The San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition in partnership with the San Diego Performing Arts League has made available online the candidate responses to an Arts and Culture Candidate Questionnaire.

All five candidates for Mayor and fifteen of the nineteen City Council candidates have submitted statements for voters to review. The mayoral candidates who completed the questionnaire or submitted a policy statement are: Eric Bidwell, Steve Francis, James Hart, Floyd Morrow, and Jerry Sanders. The city council candidates who completed the questionnaire or submitted a policy statement are: Marshall Merrifield and Sherri Lightner, District 1; Paul Broadway, Todd Gloria, John Hartley, James Hartline, and Robert E. Lee, District 3; Carl DeMaio, District 5; April Boling, Bill Daniel, and Marti Emerald, District 7.

The candidates who declined to state a position on arts and culture are: Phil Thalheimer, District 1; Stephen Whitburn, District 3; George George, District 5; and David Tos, District 7.

Colette Carson Royston, Chair of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, cited the recent report issued by the national association, Americans for the Arts: The Creative Industries in San Diego. Carson Royston said, "As this report documents, the creative industries are the high-octane fuel that drives the 'information economy'—the fastest growing segment of the nation's economy. As of January 2008, San Diego is home to 4,432 arts-related businesses that employ 24,324 people. These arts-centric businesses play an important role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy. They employ people, spend money locally, generate government revenue, and are a cornerstone of tourism and economic development. As the community selects the next Mayor and City Council, it is important to know where they stand on arts and culture, as it is such a key thread in San Diego's economic fabric."

"Arts and culture organizations are major contributors to the economy of San Diego, and a major source of education for San Diego's youth, a fact that the business community recognizes," said Dalouge Smith, Chair of the San Diego Regional Arts and Culture and Director of the San Diego Youth Symphony. "To quote Robert E. Allen, former Chairman and CEO of AT&T, 'A grounding in the arts will help our children to see; to bring a uniquely human perspective to science and technology. In short, it will help them as they grow smarter to also grow wiser.' Because of the societal and fiscal impact of the cultural sector in San Diego, we believe it is important for voters to know where candidates stand on this important issue. Thus, the Coalition asked all of them to participate in this questionnaire. Fortunately for voters, all but four candidates responded."

The candidates' statements reveal their individual positions on arts and culture, with a mix of policy perspectives and personal experiences. The questionnaires can be viewed online at http://www.sandiegoperforms.com/advocacy_news/latest_news.html; while the Americans for the Arts report on San Diego can be found at <http://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/pdf/creativeindustriessandiegopr08.pdf>

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The San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition is a collaboration of individuals and institutions acting to educate the public and elected officials to the importance of arts and culture to the economy, quality of life, and vibrancy of the San Diego region.