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## 2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

*Published verbatim and unedited*

**Office Candidate Seeks:** State Representative

**District/Ward:** District 52

**Candidate's Full Name:** Gretchen Driskell

**Party Affiliation (if applicable):** Democrat

**Candidate's E-mail Address:** gretchen@votegretchen.com

**Office Candidate Seeks:** State Representative

**District/Ward:** District 52

**Party Affiliation (if applicable):** Democrat

**Campaign Website:** www.votegretchen.com

**Campaign Contact:** Brian Merlos, 734.649.8243, brian@votegretchen.com, 141 E. Michigan Ave Suite B Saline, MI 48176

- 1. In regards to arts, culture and heritage, do you consider yourself any of the following:**  
I believe that availability and access to arts, cultural and heritage offerings in our community make our community a great place to create, live, work, play, learn and visit.  
I am a consumer of arts, culture and/or heritage products and programs.  
I am personally a donor to arts, cultural and/or heritage organizations.
- 2. What arts, cultural or heritage activities have you and/or your family members attended, participated in or supported in the past year?**  
Celtic festival, Dexter Plein Air, music events at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Arts Center
- 3. Thinking back to your own K-12 education, what arts or cultural classes, programs or activities did you participate in? In what way, if any, do you believe your participation influenced or still influences you?**  
I grew up playing instruments, and music continues to be a big part of my family life.
- 4. What role do you think arts, culture, and the creative sector can play in supporting key education priorities such as closing the achievement gap, reducing the dropout rate, and preparing more students for college enrollment and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce?**  
A well-rounded education is key for children -- studies have shown that classes in music and art help kids do better in other subject areas. I have been working hard in Lansing to secure better funding for education, and I'm running for re-election so that I can continue to do so. Schools around the state have stopped offering art classes to deal with budget shortfalls, but when we fully fund our education system, our kids can get the wide array of classes that contribute to a world-class education.
- 5. What role can arts, culture, and the creative sector play in Washtenaw's economic growth and vitality?**  
People are drawn to culture, and they want to live in places where they can experience it. Cultivating arts and culture will make communities more attractive and generate additional spending and investment. Furthermore, many of these entities are small businesses, which

generate most of our economic activity. More state support of entrepreneurs, including those in the creative sector, will help our economy grow.

**6. Do you support public investment in the creative economy? This includes arts, culture, heritage organizations and creative individuals.**

Yes

**Please explain your answer:**

I support increasing state assistance to small businesses, including those in the creative economy, so they can create jobs and make our communities a better place to live. Also I support allocating funds like MCCA grants to support community culture & art projects, and fledgling nonprofits.

**7. If elected, what measureable action(s) will you take during your term to support public investment in our community's creative economy and support arts, culture, heritage organizations and businesses and creative individuals?**

I support full funding for education so that schools can offer a robust portfolio of classes, including art and music, so that kids can enrich their education. I also believe we should help entrepreneurs, including those in the creative economy, to maintain and grow the presence of arts and culture in our communities.

**8. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture and, if elected, how will your position be reflected during the budget/planning process?**

There are several areas that deserve better funding, especially education. We also need to find money to fix our roads, and many families would benefit greatly from repealing harmful tax increases. Arts and culture are important, and while I support some public funding, we have many pressing needs that also must be met.

**9. If you support public funding for arts and culture, what do you think are the best means of allocating funds?**

Line item appropriations

Appropriations distributed via grant programs

Tax based (millages, accommodations, sales etc.)

Percent for Art/Culture ordinances

Supporting local community initiatives to invest in arts & culture

**10. If elected, would you accept an invitation to become a member in an arts, culture and heritage caucus?**

Yes

**If yes, from which caucus would you accept an invitation?**

U.S.A. Congressional Caucus

Michigan Caucus

Washtenaw County Caucus

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