

**CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES SURVEY ON THE  
ARTS AND GOVERNMENT : Entry # 15300**

**BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

**Name**

Dusty Johnson

**Candidate Website**

<http://www.dustyjohnson.com>

**Candidate Email**

[dusty@dustyjohnson.com](mailto:dusty@dustyjohnson.com)

**Office seeking:**

United States Representative

**Party:**

Republican

**Basic Arts Background of Candidate**

**Question: What is your personal background and experience in the arts?**

- Instrumental
- Vocal
- Literary Arts

**Question: What arts activities have you attended, participated in, or supported in the last year?**

- Music
- Theater
- Film/Media
- Literary Arts
- Attended a children's school performance

**Do you believe all South Dakotans should have access to the arts in their community?**

Yes

**South Dakota Arts Council**

**Are you aware of an agency of state government – the South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) – whose purpose is to recognize the importance of creativity in the lives of all South Dakotans, the Council makes quality arts accessible throughout the state by providing encouragement, grants, services and information to artists, arts organizations, schools and the public?**

Very aware

**DO YOU BELIEVE THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL, UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, SHOULD RECEIVE STATE FUNDING? Matching funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts benefited all South Dakotans and generated \$21.00 for every \$1 invested by the state of South Dakota.**

Yes

**Would you support a path to index federal funding to both the NEA and NEH at \$1 per capita for each agency, so that arts and humanities organizations in your state or district can provide even more accessible cultural programs for all its residents?**

Disagree

**Would you support the re-establishment or creation of a White House cultural advisory body, such as the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities, to advise on economic and domestic policy issues?**

Undecided

**Would you support federal legislation that would advance the creative economy, specifically including support for arts education policies and racial equity?**

Agree

**Would you support the need for future legislation to assist arts and cultural organizations and self-employed gig artists to recover from the ongoing economic fallout of the pandemic?**

Disagree

**Would you like us to contact you with further details on any of these priorities?**

No

**Additional Comments:**

I'm reticent to increase federal funding for the arts while we continue to run deficits in excess of \$1 trillion every year.

My wife and I are patrons of the arts, and we encourage all South Dakotans to do what they can to support the arts in their communities. We need the arts!

**Arts South Dakota**

**HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE ARTS TO THE EDUCATION OF ALL SOUTH DAKOTA CHILDREN?**

It is critically important. An appreciation of the arts makes us better citizens, better people, and better leaders. The arts help us understand complex concepts, allow us to empathize with different cultures and peoples, and help us better comprehend the human condition.

**WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE POTENTIAL FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA, AND HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE THAT DEVELOPMENT AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL?**

South Dakota has a rich, but not yet fully cultivated, arts environment.

I'll support continued federal funding of the arts, and encourage state government, businesses, and individuals to invest in the arts.

**WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC FUNDING FOR THE ARTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?**

It is important to have government funding for the arts, at the federal, state, and local level.

**CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES SURVEY ON THE  
ARTS AND GOVERNMENT : Entry # 14857**

**BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

**Name**

Tamara Lesnar

**Candidate Email**

[Lesnar4SDUSSenate@gmail.com](mailto:Lesnar4SDUSSenate@gmail.com)

**Office seeking:**

United States Senator

**Party:**

Libertarian

**Basic Arts Background of Candidate**

**Question: What is your personal background and experience in the arts?**

- Culinary Arts

**Question: What arts activities have you attended, participated in, or supported in the last year?**

- None

**Do you believe all South Dakotans should have access to the arts in their community?**

Yes

**South Dakota Arts Council**

**Are you aware of an agency of state government – the South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) – whose purpose is to recognize the importance of creativity in the lives of all South Dakotans, the Council makes quality arts accessible throughout the state by providing encouragement, grants, services and information to artists, arts organizations, schools and the public?**

Moderately aware

**DO YOU BELIEVE THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL, UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, SHOULD RECEIVE STATE FUNDING? Matching funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts benefited all South Dakotans and generated \$21.00 for every \$1 invested by the state of South Dakota.**

Yes

**Would you support a path to index federal funding to both the NEA and NEH at \$1 per capita for each agency, so that arts and humanities organizations in your state or district can provide even more accessible cultural programs for all its residents?**

Agree

**Would you support the re-establishment or creation of a White House cultural advisory body, such as the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities, to advise on economic and domestic policy issues?**

Agree

**Would you support federal legislation that would advance the creative economy, specifically including support for arts education policies and racial equity?**

Agree

**Would you support the need for future legislation to assist arts and cultural organizations and self-employed gig artists to recover from the ongoing economic fallout of the pandemic?**

Undecided

**Would you like us to contact you with further details on any of these priorities?**

Yes

## **Arts South Dakota**

### **HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE ARTS TO THE EDUCATION OF ALL SOUTH DAKOTA CHILDREN?**

In addition to the reasons that you have listed, I believe that the arts and humanities are ways of examining and understanding the universe in which we live. They can help provide context in our lives for learning about the universe and our interior lives in the same way that a scientific theory or idea can. Children should learn how the arts can help them to understand and express a feeling or idea in ways that ordinary language might fail to do. They can also learn from the arts that someone else might have feelings, priorities, experiences and points of view that are different from theirs and learn about the validity of those differences. Children can learn that arts can provide an island of respite from a world that is relentlessly prosaic. The arts can also build confidence and self-esteem in children by providing a sense of accomplishment and self-worth by mastering a creative skill, such as learning to play a musical instrument.

### **WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE POTENTIAL FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA, AND HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE THAT DEVELOPMENT AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL?**

Culture in America has been a mosaic and an amalgam of many cultural sources. Federal support is very important in preserving and fostering growth of our American culture. Our society needs to provide the economic support necessary to allow the creators of art the freedom to devote time and energy to their contribution to society in much the same way that we support "think tanks" to develop technical and socio-political ideas. A society that is supported in this way is stronger and more prosperous. Throughout history, societies that have stifled creativity have not fared well. Sadly there has been a history in South Dakota of suppression of Native American cultural contributions. This suppression must never be repeated. Instead, all cultural sources need to be encouraged and developed to have a healthy arts and humanities environment in our state. Cultural inclusiveness is a major part of what it means to be an American.

### **WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC FUNDING FOR THE ARTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?**

As I indicated above, public funding for the arts is very important. I would like to see wider distribution of grants to provide more equal opportunity of arts education in our schools. In less well funded school districts, arts funding often suffers. Public funding at the federal can also help guard against the current climate that fosters censorship of ideas, book banning and similar anti-democratic activities. Another role of public funding would be to provide arts education and opportunities to people who are incarcerated. For these people, the arts and humanities can provide opportunities for personal change that can

reduce recidivism.

**We welcome any additional comments or experiences you would like to make in regards to the arts in South Dakota. Please use the space below. With a reach of over 5,000 individuals, organizations and businesses, Arts South Dakota will share your responses with our statewide constituents in the Fall issue of Arts Alive, in our weekly e-newsletter, in our monthly column distributed to every weekly and daily newspaper in South Dakota, on our social media channels, and on our website:**

Nearly everyone is born with some degree of aptitude in the arts. Our educational system either by exclusion or overt effort stifles that artistic ability. Some people do well in the arts in spite of this fact, but we need to do a better job of encouraging arts education for all children.