

Stephen Huey | District 18

1. How do you personally participate in the arts and culture both in Houston and when you travel?

I have long enjoyed the vibrant arts community in Houston. Many people I have known have worked in organizations throughout our city such as the Houston Symphony, Houston Ballet, Houston Grand Opera, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra and many others. My wife has also performed in several of them. We also enjoy patronizing smaller arts organization all over the city, and have many friends who participate in the theater, dance, music and visual arts scenes. I'm grateful that many of these exist due to helpful grants. My wife and I highly value art and its power to transform, and we consider it a priority for our family. Art brings vital representation to a community. Travel is a favorite pastime for our family, and we have noticed how much beauty sets the tone in other cities' public spaces and would like to see more of that here. Houston should have more investment in the arts, not less.

2. Would you support restoring full funding to National Public Radio and PBS?

Absolutely! Since childhood, I have enjoyed programs created by public broadcasting. It was a very significant development for our country in the 20th century, so it's tragic to see it under attack in the 21st century.

3. Would you be willing to support a request for appropriations directly to the county or the City specifically for arts? Each congress person can submit requests for their district every year.

Yes, it would be my honor to do so.

4. Would you support continued funding at the 2024 level or higher for the National Endowment to the Arts?

Certainly, and generally I'd want to see more funding.

5. How would you support arts in Congressional District 18?

We the people get to choose what kind of society we want to have. At times, it feels like access to arts and cultural events is very limited based on geography and where there are concentrations of funding. People throughout our city would benefit from investment in broader accessibility. Each neighborhood needs local beautiful spaces for people to enjoy together, and funding and support to increase the number of nearby arts and culture activities. Also, I have always felt we need more arts enrichment for students, not less. As someone who enjoyed a very well-rounded education, I believe the arts are a critical component to developing the whole person. Some people go on to do something with it for a living, but even if they do not, their experiences with the arts shape them in a positive way. I remember from my time at Rice University how a friend double majored in engineering and art, and is now a successful product designer. If she had not also pursued her passion in art, she may not have become the excellent product designer she is today. For all of us, experiences in the arts and humanities have enhanced the way we appreciate and engage with the world. Connections are built between peoples which further understanding. So I believe children in the 18th district will be inspired by more opportunities in the arts. A friend created the Art Bus here in Houston, and another friend ran an interactive theater program for schools, and we need to support more endeavors such as these. But it doesn't stop with children. All of us benefit from access to a large arts scene in Houston, and we need to support the artists to ensure these opportunities remain accessible to all Houstonians. We should keep an eye out for new opportunities. I know a musician who worked with the city on a program to position live music in public spaces here. There is significant support available for arts in the city, but some communities have less available right now, and we can identify key neighborhoods that need a boost to start something new. In my position, I'll be able to amplify requests for local support. The entire nation would benefit from a policy to encourage arts growth in local communities, and I would advocate for increased federal funding.