

Candidate: Steve Miller  
 Party: Republican  
 State: Illinois  
 District: 7th



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

Music     Theater     Visual Arts     Dance     Literary Arts     Other     None

Additional Comments (optional):

2. **Background:** The budget of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was cut in half during the 1990s. With its current funding of \$144.7 million, the NEA spends just 48 cents per American—about the cost of a pack of gum.

**Question:** Do you support a significant funding increase for the National Endowment for the Arts, so that arts organizations in your district can present more high quality arts programs for all of its citizens?

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Undecided

Additional Comments (optional):

**We need to lower the tax burden on corporations and individuals so they can contribute much more, as they did in the '90's. The arts are a critical part of the human spirit and society, though placing additional tax burden on 100% of taxpayers when so few choose enjoy the benefit.**

3. **Background:** Prior to the budget cuts of the 1990s, the NEA partnered with local arts agencies to re-grant funds in their communities, ensuring strong local input and control over artistic programming, especially in rural and underserved areas. After the cuts, however, the re-granting partnership ended because of insufficient funds.

**Question:** Do you support dedicated funding for an NEA re-granting program for local arts agencies?

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Undecided

Additional Comments (optional):

**Our tax system must be modified to enable individuals and corporations to donate to NEA sponsored events to build strong programming in the rural and underserved areas.**

4. **Background:** The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) defines the arts as a core academic subject, allowing school districts to use federal funding for arts education instruction. However, implementation of NCLB has dramatically reduced the time spent teaching the arts around the country and increased the need for federal-level research measuring the status and condition of the arts.

**Question:** Do you support strengthening arts education and research through the reauthorization of NCLB?

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Undecided

Additional Comments (optional):

**To improve the United States education system -- specifically to improve the education, I believe we need to create a competitive environment that is accessible to all children. The Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom has conducted many studies and written a number of policies that would be effective to achieve success.**

**School Choice is becoming the most popular education reform idea, but not all school choice is created equal. The most powerful kinds allow parents to choose any school—public, independent, or religious. Most of the time, vouchers are what people think of when we are talking about this type of full-fledged choice. Yet, there is another policy that increasingly has been successful in recent years: education tax credits.**

**Education tax credits are more popular than vouchers. Surveys generally demonstrate that tax credits command five to 10% more support than do vouchers. A large academic poll conducted for the magazine Education Next and the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University illustrates the remarkable wide support for tax credits. Even current and former public school employees favor them by a margin of nearly two to one; public school employees oppose vouchers by a two-point margin.**

**Tax credits are more legally viable than vouchers because they are private fun**

and vouchers are government funds. State courts repeatedly have ruled that vouchers are government funds, and the disbursement of government funds to religious schools expressly is prohibited in most states by anti-Catholic "Blain amendments dating back to the turn of the 20th century. Many states also have "compelled support" clauses, which accomplish the same result through different language. Because the elimination of religious schools from choice programs excludes around 90% of current private schools, this renders any such program largely ineffectual.

Education tax credits do the most to encourage the quick development of a powerful and organized constituency. Because individual taxpayers can spend tax credits at schools and organizations of their choosing, the credits give them a stake in those schools and organizations. A woman who takes advantage of tax credit benefits, directly and personally, from the policy by supporting her own child's education—and if it is a donation tax credit, she benefits directly because she can fund a needy child or educational mission of her choice. In a similar fashion, businesses that claim tax credits on donations directly benefit from—and have a direct stake in—the law, with the added attraction of building community goodwill.

Tax credits establish a self-implementing form of school choice that relies on the private sector alone. Voucher laws must establish a new government apparatus to implement school choice or rely on a state education system that generally is hostile to school choice. Regardless of the procedure, the need for implementation by the state will increase costs and complicate matters significantly. It also will establish an additional venue for undermining school choice as well as another issue—the administrative costs to the state—on which to attack the policy. Tax credits are easier to put in place and more certain in their translation from proposal to practice because they require minimal participation from intervening government agencies to execute the legislation.

School choice supporters need to remember that the battle does not end when they win in the legislature. Education tax credits build the most powerful political constituency, and that is what ensures that a choice program survives and grows.

5. Background: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which has been level-funded at about \$400 million for several years, is a major provider of arts programming on public television and radio.

**Question:** Do you support increased funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting?

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Undecided

Additional Comments (optional):

I thoroughly enjoy the CPB entities and programming today. Prior to authorizing additional funds, I would like to conduct an audit and understand where the shortfalls are in the budget.

6. Background: Currently, art collectors can claim a fair market value tax deduction for works that they donate to cultural organizations, but artists can claim only the cost of materials when they donate work that they have created.

**Question:** Do you support bipartisan legislation to correct this inequity and to ensure that museums, libraries, and other cultural organizations receive donations?

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Undecided

Additional Comments (optional):

For more detailed information on these arts policy issues, please visit:  
[www.ArtsActionFund.org/sc/LegislativePriorities](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/sc/LegislativePriorities)

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Please fax or e-mail survey responses to 202.371.0424 or [jstrieter@artsusa.org](mailto:jstrieter@artsusa.org).

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