

1. Please complete the following general information. Thank you.

Candidate's Name: - Larry Ahern

Candidate's Web site: - [www.larryahern.com](http://www.larryahern.com)

2. Please check the office below that you're running for in 2010:

Florida House of Representatives

3. If you're running for either the Florida Senate or House of Representatives, please indicate the district below:

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4. Background: According to Dun & Bradstreet January 2010 data, there are over 47,564 arts-related businesses in Florida that employ over 184,436 people. In 2008, Florida's arts and culture not-for-profit industry generated over \$3.1 billion in local economic activity and delivered more than \$446.5 million in local and state government revenue. The arts and cultural industry is even recognized as critical to Florida's economic development in Enterprise Florida's Roadmap to Florida's Future 2010-2015 Strategic Plan for Economic Development. Statement: State appropriations and policies to advance Florida's creative industries (including arts, cultural, historical, humanities, science, and arts education resources) are extremely important to Florida's strong economic and innovative future.

I strongly agree.

5. Background: In the last three years, Florida's funding for its arts and cultural resources has been reduced from \$34.7 million in FY 2006-2007 to \$950,000 for FY 2010-2011. Florida now ranks 49th in per capita funding in state appropriations for its investment in arts and cultural resources, only 5 cents per Floridian. These drastic state cuts weaken the infrastructure that sustains this critically important industry, an industry vital to our state's overall economic and qualitative well being. Statement: Restoring state investments in Florida's vibrant arts and cultural resources produce significant returns. Increases not only to restore but also to advance funding for the arts and culture is essential to sustain Florida's creative industries' impact on economic development, jobs, tourism, downtown revitalization, health and wellness, student achievement, crime prevention, and quality of life.

I strongly agree.

6. Background: State and national research indicates that arts education is critical to help prepare students for a future workforce that will depend upon creativity and innovation. The Florida Department of Education recently completed research that demonstrates (1) For the general population, the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student achievement in all measures; (2) For students on "free and reduced lunch," an indicator of socioeconomic levels, the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student

achievement in all measures; (3) For students divided by ethnicity, the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student achievement in all measures; (4)The more arts classes taken, the less likely a student is to dropout of school. Statement: Local, state, and federal policy makers must work collectively and collaboratively to provide adequate funding and policy support to ensure that all our students can study one or more of the fine arts (music, dance, theater, and art) taught by certified fine arts teachers as a requirement of their graduation.

I strongly agree.

7. Please share with us below your thoughts about and experiences with arts and cultural resources -- thank you so much:

I enjoy all the arts in our area. We must continue to support and insure our next generation will have the same level of availability that we have had in ours. The new look at our Dali museum here in St. Petersburg is beautiful. St. Petersburg is becoming a destination for all the arts and science. Tampa has a great Performing Arts Theater. We are truly blessed in this area.