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| **From:** | mutualaid@dsasantacruz.org |
| **To:** | CACH |
| **Subject:** | We oppose the appointment of Darius Mohsenin to the CACH |
| **Date:** | Monday, February 3, 2020 5:22:46 PM |
| **Attachments:** | dsasantacruzletterhead.png |

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Dear members of the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness,

We are writing to express our concern about the application of Darius Mohsenin to serve on the CACH. We believe the appointment of Mr. Mohsenin would discredit the committee and deter houseless people and those most at risk of houselessness from fully participating.

Mr. Mohsenin has a record of public statements disparaging low-income renters. During the campaign for rent control in Santa Cruz, he distributed a flyer which stoked fears using racist stereotypes: https://www.kron4.com/news/santa-cruz-landlord-faces-criticism-over-racist-flyers/
Whether or not he personally harbors racist beliefs, the fact that he was willing to traffic in racist stereotypes to achieve his political goals should be of concern to this committee.

Mr. Mohsenin stated at the last CACH meeting, as a Section 8 landlord, he can and does move people into homelessness. Here is a documented case where his failure to maintain one of his rental properties resulted in tenants being displaced: https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2014/04/03/santa-cruz-red-tag-forces-tenants-to-move-out/

While tenants of Section 8 housing currently do have some legal protections, it is mainly up to the tenants themselves to enforce these protections through the legal system. Mr. Mohsenin has ample access to legal representation when defending himself from tenant claims, as a search of the Santa Cruz County Court portal will show. However, he has attempted to block funding that would level the playing field for low-income tenants in the city. He vocally opposed city funding for Tenant Sanctuary, a nonprofit providing free counseling and legal services to tenants regardless of their immigration status (The other main legal services provider in Santa Cruz, is prevented from serving undocumented tenants). This should be a matter of great concern for your committee, since access to legal services for all tenants is important in preventing homelessness.

At the last CACH meeting, several references were made to Mr. Mohsenin's possible appointment as counting toward representation of the nonprofit sector on the committee. The definition of a nonprofit entity is clear and Mr. Mohsenin's real estate investment and management business does not meet this criterion. While he accepts thousands of dollars in government subsidies each month, Mr. Mohsenin is in business for profit.

While we accept that currently there are few alternatives to the system of Section 8 subsidies to private landlords, it is a very poor substitute for real public housing. And Mr Mohsenin in particular does not represent its most public-serving aspects and should not be involved in future policy guidance.

Sincerely,

Mutual Aid Working Group
Democratic Socialists of America - Santa Cruz