



**TEXAS
HOUSERS**



Coalition for Tenant Justice

SAN ANTONIO — As the San Antonio Housing Authority plans to appoint a new leader in the coming months, tenants are demanding a say in the process and calling on SAHA to treat tenants with dignity and respect, starting from the top down.

SAHA has been rattled by bad press over the past two years as ever-increasing testimonies of issues with pests, safety, and concerns over tenant retaliation have continued to accumulate. In the four years between 2016 and 2020, the number of SAHA properties receiving a failing score from HUD increased from just one to 13. David Nisivoccia has been applauded for the private real estate market deals that SAHA has been conducting over the last two years. However the deterioration of existing housing stock along with an increase in the number of failing properties should point to the fact that SAHA needs a new CEO. One who can reorient the vision of SAHA beyond financial metrics and prioritize the lives and homes of tenants above anything else.

It would be highly inappropriate for SAHA, in their search for a new CEO, to not prioritize tenant opinion and delegate actual representation during the final decision for a CEO. Several residents mentioned possible traits for potential candidates. The Coalition for Tenant Justice (CTJ) has heard directly from SAHA tenants who experience the disrespect, worrisome living conditions, and lack of transparency living in SAHA properties. Kayla Miranda, a community organizer and the Alazan Chair of the Historic Westside Residents Association, mentioned she hopes that a potential candidate is someone *“who knows the inner-workings of HUD and is not another business-minded CEO. Someone who wishes to preserve rather than destroy”*.

The search for a new CEO provides SAHA with an opportunity to reflect, plan, and incorporate the values that tenants believe would make the housing authority more responsive to their lives and priorities. Isabel Galban, a tenant of Section 8, stated any new CEO needs to be:

“Someone who has experienced this side of the fence.... Someone who understands the struggle and stress of depending on some type of government-assistance “

Additional residents living in SAHA have mentioned that a CEO who has experienced similar living conditions, stress, and decisions when living in public housing, is someone they believe

can be a true ally within SAHA. As for the selection process and tenant representation within it, Rachel, a resident of Blanco Apartments and a member of CTJ stated

“It would be great if we could meet any potential candidate, if they could come to the properties and see for themselves the work that needs to be done”.

We call on SAHA to utilize this opportunity to truly give a voice to those the CEO should serve. SAHA tenants deserve a leader who can fight for safe, affordable, and respectable homes.