



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NEWS RELEASE



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FRIEND, RATNER RECEIVE STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chair Zach Friend and Housing for Health (H4H) Director Robert Ratner were recognized this week for statewide leadership by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the leading organization advocating for County programs and services throughout the state.

At CSAC's 129th Annual Meeting held in Alameda County, Supervisor Friend and Dr. Ratner both received CSAC's prestigious Circle of Service Award, presented to recognize county officials, employees, and other members whose service to the county family, CSAC membership and the advancement of CSAC goals is substantially above and beyond the norm. The awards were two of just eight Circle of Service Awards awarded throughout California.

"Supervisor Friend and Dr. Ratner exemplify what it means to be public servants," said Graham Knaus, CSAC's chief executive officer. "We are proud to recognize their contributions to the mission of all counties throughout California in assuring that we are delivering the highest quality programs and services to our residents."

Supervisor Friend serves as Chair of CSAC's Health and Human Services Policy Committee was recognized for advocating on behalf of CSAC for all 58 counties via public testimony during legislative hearings on the Mental Health Services Act and other mental health initiatives, advocating for counties through media and in meetings with legislative members. Friend was first elected to the Board in 2012, and also advocates on behalf of the County at the federal level, including serving on the National Association of Counties Board of Directors and with various local and regional agencies.

H4H Division director since 2020, Dr. Ratner was recognized for his assistance in developing CSAC's statewide AT HOME plan, which advocates for a statewide and comprehensive plan to address homelessness effectively and equitably. Dr. Ratner was a leader on the Homelessness Policy Solutions Group, lending his expertise to peers throughout California. He was an indispensable resource in generating and refining policy ideas for consideration within the AT HOME plan and continues his work leading the County's Housing for Health Division as it makes meaningful progress to address homelessness in Santa Cruz County.

For more on CSAC's mission, advocacy and programs, visit counties.org.