



NATIONAL IRANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL
Promoting Iranian-American Participation in American Civic Life

Mr. Ben Marrison
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Dear Mr. Marrison,

A cartoon published in the editorial page of your newspaper on September 4 has depicted Iran as a sewer on a map of the Middle East with cockroaches crawling out of it. By publishing this shocking cartoon, the editors of the *Columbus Dispatch* have insulted and propagated hate against a large segment of the American population that traces its roots to an ancient and proud civilization.

Iranian Americans have been living in the United States as early as the 1950s and 1960s, first as students, then as immigrants seeking a better life. In a short period of time, they have established themselves to be one of the most successful and highly contributing immigrant groups that have recently settled in this country.

It is a community that boasts among its members both the founder of eBay – Pierre Omidyar – and the world's first female space tourist – Anousheh Ansari.

Up until the late 1970s the United States and Iran enjoyed a close alliance. Many Iranians immigrated here to escape the turmoil of the Iranian revolution of 1979 and to demonstrate their opposition to the turn of events in that country. Nonetheless, Iranian Americans are proud of their heritage despite the dispute that grips the United States and Iran today.

The American people, 80 percent of whom oppose military conflict with Iran, deserve better from your editorial page. They expect content that explains the complexities and challenges America faces in the world. They demand information that describes how the rest of the world perceives us, and explores how best to make peace with the people of the world.

The bigotry demonstrated by the publication of this cartoon not only betrays the mission to inform your readers, it endangers our country at an extremely sensitive time in our nation's history by serving to further divide us at home and thrust us toward further conflict abroad.

Sincerely,

Dokhi Fassihian
Member of the Board of Directors