



Chair Marc Korman
and Members, Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Regional Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. **GGWash supports House Bill 1179, Pets in Housing Developments**, which will reduce housing barriers for pet owners and keep families together.

If you have a pet, you know: it can be hard to find a place to live, or keep it. I speak from experience as the owner of a pit bull mix, one of dozens of dog breeds typically banned in rental complexes. For example, as of today, there are exactly four apartment complexes in Montgomery County that would take my dog, which I learned after weeks of calling around and being told by dozens of leasing agents that they would not rent to us because of my dog's breed¹. It's no surprise that housing issues are a big reason why people have to surrender their pets, according to the Best Friends Animal Society².

As written, House Bill 1179 would apply to affordable housing developments that receive funding from the state. It would allow tenants to keep pets without requiring additional pet rent, reducing their cost burden. It would also block landlords from placing restrictions on weight or breed, which research shows is not effective in keeping residents or dogs safe³. At the same time, this bill would allow landlords to enforce leash laws and ban dangerous dogs, which the state specifically defines as a dog that has caused physical harm⁴.

Continued on next page


¹ <https://www.mypitbullisfamily.org/housing>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/05/17/pandemic-pets-shaming-animal-welfare/>

³

<https://www.aaha.org/publications/newstat/articles/2023-2/breed-bans-and-the-human-animal-bond-not-taking-a-bite-out-of-crime>

⁴ Md. Criminal Law Code Ann. § 10-619: A dangerous dog is one who "bites a person; when not on its owner's real property, kills or inflicts severe injury on a domestic animal; or attacks without provocation."

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This bill will open up housing options for pet owners so families won't have to choose between their pets and shelter. It ensures that families can stay together, pets can stay in loving homes, and already stretched shelters and rescues can help more pets in need. We urge the Environment and Transportation Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and the last name "Reed" clearly distinguishable.

Dan Reed
Regional Policy Director