



## TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

**DATE:** March 31, 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable

**BILL:** HB 168

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports House Bill 168, which equips municipalities with new authority, new resources, and a clear role in addressing educator workforce housing, while preserving local approval and fiscal choice.

HB 168 makes existing state housing programs more practical and usable at the local level. By allowing Housing Innovation Pilot Program projects to qualify by setting aside a portion of units for educator workforce housing, rather than relying solely on income thresholds, the bill introduces flexibility that better reflects real-world workforce housing needs. Municipal projects may also leverage state and federal tax credits, including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, to support housing for teachers and school staff.

HB 168 also explicitly recognizes municipalities as eligible applicants and project leads, rather than treating them as passive partners. Local governments are given clearer authority to propose projects, access state housing programs, and coordinate directly with the Department of Housing and Community Development, ensuring solutions are shaped by local priorities, planning processes, and capacity.

Finally, the bill creates no fiscal impact for municipalities that choose not to participate. Participation is voluntary, and municipalities that opt in gain access to new state resources, potential federal funding, and flexible financing tools, with manageable administrative obligations. As a result, the bill presents a favorable fiscal value proposition for local governments.

By empowering municipalities while preserving local control and fiscal discretion, HB 168 offers a balanced and collaborative approach to addressing educator workforce housing. For these reasons, the League respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 168.

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For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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*Municipalities are home to 25% of Maryland's population while occupying less than 5% of the State's land area.*