



## TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE:** House Judiciary

**DATE:** March 12, 2026

**POSITION:** Unfavorable

**BILL:** HB 1568

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) opposes House Bill 1568, Local Government - Animal Control - Dogs At Large (Dog Leash Laws).

HB 1568 requires all local governments to adopt a local law that prohibits an owner from allowing the dog to be at-large and also establishes procedures for impounding a dog at-large and penalties for non-compliance. The definition of “running at-large” used by the Appellate Court of Maryland in *Blitzer v. Breski*, 259 Md. App. 257 (2023).

Under the concept of Home Rule, local governments have broad authority to establish local laws that promote the health and safety of their residents and visitors; and dog control requirements are one of them. There are already many municipalities that have local laws that require the owner to have their dog under control in certain circumstances. These local laws go through a transparent public process and are written to reflect the values of the community. MML regularly opposes legislation that restricts the authority or places mandates on municipal governments; and this bill eliminates the local element of these types of rules by mandating strict parameters around dog and people safety.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the committee provide House Bill 1568 with an unfavorable report.

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

Bill Jorch: Managing Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, [billj@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:billj@mdmunicipal.org)

*MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.*