



A DOG'S LIFE

Chaining and Your Community

How to pass a local ordinance

1. **Learn the process.** The process for local legislation varies around the country, so take the time to get familiar with how things work in your community. An official or employee in your local government may be able to help you. Typically, for a city or county government, a bill is introduced to a council by a member of that council. These individuals are usually called councilmen or aldermen. In some cases, proposed legislation will go to a small committee for review. Other times, the entire council may vote on it without a committee. Proposed legislation may be discussed at several meetings over a few months so that public comment may be heard. Sometimes amendments (changes) will be suggested or made, though these amendments will also need to be voted on before being inserted into the proposed legislation.
2. **Find a friend in office.** Public officials tend to take their constituents very seriously, so try talking to your own representative first. As much as we'd love the people we vote for to agree with us, this may not always work. If your own council member isn't interested, don't despair. Try to find another official with an interest in animal issues and pitch your idea to them.
3. **Draft the ordinance.** You may already know what you want your ordinance to say, but it will have to be crafted into an appropriate legislative format. Looking through the enclosed sample ordinances can give you some ideas about what these ordinances look like. If you can't write this yourself, someone from your local government may be able to help you by putting your ideas into the proper format.
4. **Get community support.** The "Tips for Testifying" information enclosed in this packet can give you some good pointers on who in your community will support you. Supporting a local ordinance like this means doing things like testifying at council meetings, contacting council members to express support for the ordinance, and informing others about the ordinance. Spreading information is so important to an issue like this. Even in big cities, it can be common for very few people to get involved in local government (which means a small group of people are changing laws and policies), so getting active community support can make or break the legislation you are trying to pass.
5. **Testify.** The "Tips for Testifying" information goes into great detail about what to say and how to say it at council meetings.



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6. **Compromise (if needed).** As easy and straight-forward as this all sounds, things may not run so smoothly. Whether because of enforcement issues or strong opposition, sometimes you may have to compromise on your ordinance. This is ok. Be prepared to compromise ahead of time. Know what parts of your ordinance are most important and which ones can be set aside if needed.
7. **Regroup after defeat.** You may not win your battle on the first time around, but don't give up. Maybe your council just wasn't ready for this particular issue at this time. However, now you have introduced them to the many problems with dog chaining. Talk to those councilmembers who voted against your bill and find out why. You can learn from this experience and try to pass a better bill in the future.
8. **Celebrate victory, but remain vigilant.** Unfortunately, passing an ordinance doesn't mean that it will be enacted as is, well-enforced, or will remain a part of local law forever. Sometimes city or county attorneys will change the language of legislation that has been passed. In other cases, the law may be challenged in court and defeated. Whatever the situation, keep an eye out for tethering issues in your community after your ordinance has passed.