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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 436**

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**DOROTHY J. LENNIG, LEGAL CLINIC DIRECTOR**

The House of Ruth is a non-profit organization providing shelter, counseling and legal services to victims of domestic violence throughout the State of Maryland. Senate Bill 436 allows a person to bring a civil action against another person who knowingly causes the police to arrive at a place with the intent to infringe on the person's rights or cause other harm. **We urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to amend and favorably report on Senate Bill 436.**

The House of Ruth supports the intent of this bill but is concerned that an unintended consequence of the bill could negatively impact victims of domestic violence. For example: a victim calls police after an incident of abuse and the police ask the perpetrator to leave the premises. If the parties come to an agreement to separate and the victim decides not to go forward with criminal charges, the perpetrator could use this bill to file a civil lawsuit against the victim for having called the police. While we do not believe that was the intent of this bill, we are concerned it could be misused in this fashion.

We respectfully suggest the following amendment to specifically exclude domestic violence cases from this bill.

**On page 1, line 19, before "A PERSON" insert "(A) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (B)"**

**On page 2, line 19, insert "(B) THIS LAW DOES NOT APPLY TO A PERSON WHO KNOWINGLY CALLS A POLICE OFFICER TO ARRIVE AT A LOCATION AND WHO AT THE TIME OF THE CALL MAY HAVE BEEN ELIGIBLE FOR RELIEF AS DEFINED IN 4-501 OF THE FAMILY LAW ARTICLE."**

**The House of Ruth urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to amend Senate Bill 436 and issue a favorable report.**