



Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

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Bill No.: House Bill 497
Bill Title: Family Law – Temporary and Final Protective Orders – Duration and Relief
Committee: Judiciary
Hearing Date: February 12, 2026
Position: **FAV**

House of Ruth is a non-profit organization providing shelter, counseling, and legal services to victims of domestic violence throughout the State of Maryland. House of Ruth has offices in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George’s County, and Montgomery County. House Bill 497 would extend the time during which a temporary protective order can remain in effect from seven to fourteen days and would authorize the court to order a respondent to pay for certain expenses incurred as a result of abuse. **We urge the House Judiciary Committee to favorably report on House Bill 497.**

Under current law, a final protective order hearing must be scheduled within seven days of issuance of a temporary protective order. House Bill 497 would lengthen this time to fourteen days, affording both petitioners and respondents who are served more time in which to find legal representation. The additional time would also create more opportunity for law enforcement to locate respondents and effectuate service.

HB 497 would also add to the forms of relief in a final protective order that courts can order respondents to pay for certain losses or expenses incurred as a result of the abuse, including, but not limited to, medical costs, repairs to damaged property, relocation costs, transportation costs, and attorney’s fees. Inability to pay for these types of expenses is a barrier to many victims achieving safety even with a final protective order in place. Adding these forms of reimbursement to the types of relief available in a final protective order will serve to enhance the safety of domestic violence survivors and their children.

The House of Ruth urges the House Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 497.