



House of Ruth
Maryland

Marjorie Cook Foundation

Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

2201 Argonne Drive • Baltimore, Maryland 21218 • 410-554-8463 • dlennig@hruthmd.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 227

February 4, 2020

DOROTHY J. LENNIG, LEGAL CLINIC DIRECTOR

The House of Ruth Maryland is a non-profit organization providing shelter, counseling, and legal services to victims of domestic violence throughout the State of Maryland. Senate Bill 227 would automatically extend a protective order pending a hearing on a motion to extend the order. **We urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 227.**

Under certain circumstances, protective order petitioners have the ability to file to extend their final orders by filing a motion and attending a hearing on the motion. Because the courts are busy, frequently the hearings on these motions are not held until after the original expiration date of the final orders. If the protective order expires before the hearing is held, then the order no longer exists and the court cannot extend it.

To address this situation, in 2014, the protective order statute was amended to enable courts to extend a final protective order on a short-term basis until the date of the hearing on the extension. We thought this solved the problem, but since 2014 there have been cases where the court accidentally does not extend the protective order until the hearing date, leaving the petitioner in the same situation – without an order and nothing to extend. HB 250 would resolve this issue by automatically extending the order until the hearing, thus removing any possibility that the order will expire before the hearing on the extension.

The House of Ruth urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 227.