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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS OF SENATE BILL 41**

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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. The House of Ruth Domestic Violence Legal Clinic has offices in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County. Senate Bill 41 amends current family law to require courts to make certain findings on the record if it is going to order custody or visitation in a case where a child has been abused. **We urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to amend and report favorably on Senate Bill 41.**

Section 9-101 of the Family Law Article provides important protections to children in cases where the court finds that a party in a custody or visitation proceeding has abused or neglected a child. Senate Bill 41 clarifies the process a judge must follow when considering visitation to a parent who has committed abuse or neglect.

House of Ruth suggests that the bill be amended to strike the language on page 2, lines 30-33, as this language is duplicative of the language on page 2, line 21. In addition to being redundant, we are concerned about the potential for one parent to use this very broad language against the other parent in high conflict cases.

**The House of Ruth urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to amend and report favorably on Senate Bill 41.**