



House of Ruth Maryland

Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

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Bill No.: Senate Bill 174
Bill Title: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Committee: Finance
Hearing Date: January 28, 2025
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. Senate Bill 174 would enter Maryland into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states. **We urge the Senate Finance Committee to favorably report on Senate Bill 174.**

Many survivors of intimate partner violence seek the support of social workers to deal with the myriad mental health issues that can arise as a result of experiencing domestic violence, including post-traumatic stress and depression. Therapy not only provides an opportunity for victims to overcome the effects of abuse after they have left the relationship; for some survivors, engaging in therapy helps them to feel empowered to leave a violent relationship and assists them in formulating plans to leave safely.

Some survivors have to flee to another state temporarily or permanently in order to achieve safety and extricate themselves from an abusive relationship. When survivors relocate to another state, under current law they are unable to continue to receive therapeutic support from the provider with whom they have been engaged. This removes a crucial element of their safety net and mental health support at a time when they are especially vulnerable.

Senate Bill 174 would enable survivors of intimate partner violence to maintain their therapeutic relationships even when they have to relocate to another state by making Maryland part of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. By joining this compact, survivors of intimate partner violence will be able to maintain continuity of care with their social workers during critical transitions in their lives.

The House of Ruth urges the Senate Finance Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 174.