



# House of Ruth Maryland

## Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

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Bill No.: Senate Bill 20  
Bill Title: Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act  
Committee: Judicial Proceedings  
Hearing Date: January 20, 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. Senate Bill 20 would broaden the circumstances under which respondents in protective order cases are required to surrender firearms. **We urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to favorably report on Senate Bill 20.**

Currently, the protective order statute requires respondents to surrender firearms after issuance of a final protective order. Courts may order a respondent to surrender firearms at the temporary protective order stage under certain circumstances and in the discretion of the judge. Senate Bill 20 would expand the current law to require surrender of firearms upon issuance of any temporary protective order.

Research shows that an abuser's possession of a firearm is a strong risk factor contributing to the likelihood of a domestic violence victim's death or serious bodily injury. Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell of Johns Hopkins University conducted an intimate partner femicide study. She studied factors increasing the risk of intimate partner homicide and near homicide in ten cities around the country. Dr. Campbell's research concluded that the **perpetrator having access to a gun increased the victim's odds for being killed almost 5 ½ times** over other victims.

Victims of domestic violence are at increased risk of harm immediately after separating from their abusive partners. Expanding the protective order statute to require surrender of firearms at the temporary stage will provide important protection for victims.

**The House of Ruth urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 20.**