

The Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act, Senate Bill 624, is a long overdue common-sense Bill that will provide basic fire safety standards for the thousands of short-term renters in Maryland that obtain facilities through booking services and by direct contract with hosts. The basic elements should encompass: (1) A licensing requirement for hosts that derive income from short-term rentals that include provision of fire safety elements as indicated in the Bill. (2) Annual certification of licensing requirement compliance as defined in the Bill through inspections overseen by Maryland counties and Baltimore city. (3) The requirement that booking services confirm that safety certification has been obtained annually for host facilities with the certification available to potential renters. Ideally, the license would be required to be displayed at the host facility.

While fires that result in injury and loss of life in short-term rentals are unusual, when it happens the outcome is devastating. Jillian and Lindsay Wiener were the victims of gross negligence by the hosts of a property that was rented through an online booking service. This would have been entirely preventable if the elements of the proposed Bill were in force at that time. Jillian and Lindsay's mother, Alisa Wiener, has devoted herself to pursuing the implementation of this Bill so that other lives will not be lost to fires - so that parents will not experience the unimaginable loss of their children - so that brothers and sisters will not experience the unimaginable loss of siblings. Hopefully, passage of this Bill into law in Maryland will be a template for other states to enact similar legislation.