

Testimony of Steven A. Robins

SB 0624 and HB 1221

Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fires Safety Act

To Members of the Maryland House of Delegates and Senate, my name is Steven Robins, and I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 0624/HB1221, Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act. I commend Senator Brian Feldman and Delegate Linda Foley for introducing this important legislation. The legislation is in the public interest - it will save lives and should be enacted without delay.

I am confident that by now, all of you understand how this legislation came about and the tragic incident in New York that turned a beautiful family vacation into an unimaginable and devastating tragedy. I have been especially focused on the Wiener family because of my close, long-standing relationship with Alisa Weiner's husband, Lewis. I served on the Washington Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors when Lew was President, and I also maintained strong personal and professional ties with him. Simply put, Lew was a great friend, confidant, and someone I truly respected. The Wiener family faced an unimaginable loss on a summer evening—a devastating house fire that could have been prevented, leading to the deaths of Jillian and Lindsay, two beautiful young women pursuing their dreams at the University of Michigan and Tulane University. They had their whole future ahead of them, and in a moment, it was taken away. Thankfully, Lew, Alisa, and Zachary survived the fire, but their lives would never be the same. This was a loss that cannot be repaired. Tragically, Lew also passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. This left what was once a loving family of five with only two members. While Alyssa and Zach continue to move forward, nothing can replace the loss of the two girls on that tragic night.

This bill reflects common sense and will protect people just like the Wiener family, who simply wanted to enjoy time together on a family vacation. It puts the onus on the appropriate parties to make sure that rental properties are safe. This is the right thing to do.

I have been a Maryland resident all my life. I am a partner at a major Maryland law firm. I ask this legislative body to do the right thing without delay. Honor Jillian and Lindsay's lives in a dignified and meaningful way. Alisa and Zach have shown incredible courage in pursuing this legislation. Let's celebrate this legislation as a victory for safe rentals. Let us not forget why this legislation is being pursued. It's the right thing to do.

Thank you for considering my perspective. Everyone in the community who knows the Wiener family has shared in this devastating loss in some way. I am proud to stand with Alisa and support this cause. I am also motivated to carry this legislation forward for Lew, who would have unquestionably been at the forefront of this effort.

I look forward to the passage of the legislation and standing by the Wiener family when this happens.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Robins