

I am writing in the strongest possible support of the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act (SB0624). This bill is deeply personal to my family. It would help protect short-term renters from the horrific tragedy that claimed the lives of my two beautiful, talented, loving, caring nieces, Jillian Rose Wiener (21) and Lindsay Eliza Wiener (19), who were so full of life, and forever devastated their mother (my sister), father (my brother-in-law), and brother (my nephew).

My sister and her family were on their summer vacation, staying in an expensive short-term rental home they found through VRBO, a major web-based vacation rental platform. The listing described a beautiful home in a beach town, highlighted numerous positive reviews, and referenced safety features. Unknown to my sister and her family, the owners had failed to maintain functioning smoke detectors and had performed unpermitted, uninspected electrical work. Equally unknown to them, VRBO listed this property on their website without validating that the owners had taken basic safety measures; protections that SB0624 would require.

In the wee hours of the morning on August 3, 2022, my sister and brother-in-law were jarred awake by the sound of glass exploding from the intense heat of the fire. Jillian's and Lindsay's lives were lost in this fire because of the homeowners' gross negligence in not putting batteries in the smoke detectors and the failure of oversight from VRBO. Since then, other families have similarly endured unimaginable loss from fires while staying in short-term rentals without functioning smoke detectors.

The Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act is a necessary, common-sense measure to protect consumers from the kind of preventable tragedy that shattered my family and other families since. I commend Senator Feldman and all supporters of SB0624 for advancing this critical legislation for the public good. This bill makes it clear that short-term rentals lacking basic safety standards cannot be listed on web-based platforms. Moreover, the homeowners can easily confirm that the smoke detectors are working before the arrival of a new renter when they make the beds and clean. While nothing can bring Jillian and Lindsay back, we can—and must—take action to ensure no other family suffers as ours has.