

TESTIMONY

My name is Alisa Wiener, and I live in Montgomery County. I wish with everything I have that the story I am about to share wasn't mine.

I am here today because my beautiful daughters, Jillian and Lindsay, are not. I am here because I have a responsibility to make sure that the tragedy that happened to my family does not happen to anyone else.

Jillian was a rising senior at the University of Michigan. She was adventurous, silly, soulful, resilient, and daring. She was quietly confident with an inner strength and sense of herself that was unwavering. She never went with the crowd but chose her own path. She was an environmental science major and was planning to save the coral reefs. Jillian would have been 25 years old.

Lindsay was a rising sophomore at Tulane University. Although she was only on campus for one semester, everyone knew her. My husband, Lew, once said that Lindsay could walk into a room of 100 people and would leave with 100 best friends. She was that kind of person; she was magnetic. She was kind, compassionate and exuberant. She was passionate about combating antisemitism. Lindsay would have been 23 years old.

There has been a ripple effect of loss from our community outside of Washington, DC, to their colleges, the University of Michigan and Tulane University, to their camp community in the Finger Lakes region in New York, to French Polynesia and Turks and Caicos. Beautiful tributes have been made in Jillian and Lindsay's memories, including a Tulane scholarship in Lindsay's name to fight antisemitism, a scholarship at The School for Field Study in South

Caicos and a coral rope named for Jillian at Coral Gardeners in French Polynesia. At Holton Arms School, where Jillian and Lindsay went to high school, a community engagement initiative was established to honor the giving spirit of our girls. At Camp Seneca Lake, a camp scholarship was created. A bench and a tree were dedicated on Tulane's campus in memory of Lindsay. Beautiful candlesticks commissioned by a Washington, DC artist were created to keep Jillian and Lindsay's memory shining bright. The impact of their loss reaches far and wide.

I miss them with every ounce of my being. I miss their laughter; the energy and light they brought to my life is indescribable. My daughters were already making a difference. The world is a lot dimmer in their absence. We need more Jillians and Lindsays in this world.

I am here because my family rented a vacation home. We trusted that the home we rented was safe and that the safety checklist provided to us by vrbo was accurate. Our story is a nightmare. It is one that I live every single day of my life. Nothing will change the outcome of that night for my family and me, but I know this bill will save lives.

Lew and I awoke at 3:30 am to the sound of shattering glass. I have no idea what temperature it takes glass to shatter and break, but by the time we were awakened, the kitchen wall was on fire. No alarms blaring, just silence.

Our three children were asleep upstairs, and we could not reach them. I cannot begin to describe the terror and complete helplessness I experienced in those moments. My son, Zach

miraculously jumped from the second-floor window. I cannot fully express the tremendous feeling of relief and gratitude when I saw Zach run around to the side of the house. I was expecting Jillian and Lindsay to follow, but they never did.

If the home we rented had been equipped with functioning smoke detectors, I would not be in this position to share such personal and tragic testimony.

This bill provides essential fire safety guidelines. I want to highlight the most important aspects. First, short-term rentals must have functioning smoke detectors and must be inspected annually. Second, homeowners must provide written proof of safety inspections uploaded to the rental platform before they can be listed. Currently, short-term rental platforms do not verify safety information or require proof of functioning smoke detectors.

I mentioned earlier in my testimony that I want to make sure this does NOT happen to anyone else, but it has. It happened to the Hubbard family. Shannon, a 35-year-old kindergarten teacher and her one-year-old baby, Maggie, perished in a house fire in the home they rented in Clinton, New York.

When I read about this fire, my heart sank. And while our tragedies happened in New York, this can happen anywhere; it can happen here. Inspired by Shannon's father, Tim Waldron, who helped pass legislation in Massachusetts, I believe we can begin here and work to create change in Maryland.

I want to thank Senator Brian Feldman and his chief of staff, Frederica Struse, for taking on this important issue and making it a priority.

I urge you to pass this essential and commonsense bill. It will save lives. It could have saved Jillian and Lindsay's precious lives.