

SB 0970 - SUPPORT
Cassandra Greetham
cassandra.greetham@gmail.com
954-850-0372

SB 0970 SUPPORT
Fire Protection and Prevention- Sprinkler Systems and Smoke Alarms-
Requirements (Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act)

March 15, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing in support of the Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Saves lives act (SB0970). As a friend of Melanie and the Diaz/Madera family, I believe it is urgent that the legislature do the right thing in acting towards the protection of our family and friends, and prevention of situations similar to the one that took Melanie's life.

On February 18th, 2023, the Diaz/Madera family tragically lost a huge piece of their heart, Melanie Diaz, in a fire in her high-rise apartment in Silver Spring, Maryland. Although the direct cause of the incident is unknown, it is believed by many, including firefighting professionals, that the correct implementation of fire safety protocol in the building could have stopped the spread of this fire that ultimately injured many and ended Melanie's life.

Since this tragedy occurred, I have spent hours with the family, as they plan memorial services, make arrangements for Melanie's belongings, and try to find a way to live in their new normal, all while trying to emotionally mourn the loss of their daughter. Although death is a normal part of life, there is nothing normal about parents having to make these arrangements for their own child, especially at the ripe age of 25. The mental and emotional strain that the family has endured can not be measured, but is being used to drive the motive to make a change so this type of tragedy can be prevented in the future.

From the time we are young and in school, basic fire safety such as "stop, drop, and roll" and "have a plan ready" is engraved in our brain. Although we keep this knowledge in our minds, it is only so useful when we don't have the proper equipment to provide us the protection in our homes. When we live in high-rise complexes, we rely on Bills such as this one to provide us that protection, as basic safety is a right, not a luxury. Installments of proper fire sprinkler/alarm systems, smoke detection, and inclusive systems for those who are visual and/or hearing impaired should be present in these buildings without any question. This equipment alone could have altered the outcome on February 18th, leaving us in a different position today. Between 2017 and 2019, there were an estimated 2,770 deaths due to fires in residential buildings. That would come out to approximately 13,850 deaths in a 10 year span, which is what we could potentially face if we wait until 2033 to make this change. The change MUST be made sooner, rather than later.

I urge a favorable report on SB 0970.



Cassandra Greetham
cassandra.greetham@gmail.com