

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HB1221, which establishes clear, enforceable fire-safety requirements for short-term rental units offered for less than 30 consecutive days. Guests in short-term rentals are often unfamiliar with the home's layout and exits, so lifesaving information and equipment must be obvious, present, and functioning every time.

HB1221 requires short-term rental hosts to conspicuously post an evacuation diagram identifying all exits (and, if applicable, the exits from the building), post emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement and fire rescue services, provide a working fire extinguisher, and provide working smoke alarms. The bill also strengthens reliability by requiring smoke alarms to be maintained in accordance with applicable fire codes, interconnected when multiple alarms are required, clearly audible in sleeping rooms/areas, and replaced if they stop functioning, are more than 10 years old, or lack a production date. These are practical, achievable steps that help people react quickly and correctly when seconds matter.

This bill is named in honor of Jillian and Lindsay Wiener. Although I did not know them personally, their loss has been felt even at our shared college community at Tulane University. I never had the opportunity to meet Lindsay, but many of my close friends loved her deeply, and her absence has remained present in our community. No family or community should have to endure a loss that basic, well-communicated fire-safety measures can help prevent.

HB1221 is also strong because it adds accountability beyond individual hosts. Booking services must notify hosts of these requirements and require hosts to provide confirmation documentation of compliance. In addition, counties and Baltimore City must require annual inspections and report the number of short-term rentals and the number in compliance to the State Fire Marshal, and the State Fire Marshal must report that information to the General Assembly.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1221. Thank you for your time and consideration.