

Testimony in Support of the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act
March 3, 2026

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I am writing in strong support of the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act.

This bill addresses a critical gap in safety protections for families who stay in short-term rental properties. It requires basic, common-sense measures, such as working smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, clearly posted evacuation plans, and accessible emergency information, that many of us rightfully assume are already in place when we travel.

This legislation is deeply personal to me because it is inspired by the loss of two beloved young lives, Jillian and Lindsay Wiener, who were dear friends to our family. Their deaths are not only heartbreaking, they were preventable. No family should ever have to endure such an unimaginable loss while simply staying in what should be a safe home.

Short-term rentals are now a routine part of travel for families across Maryland and beyond. Yet unlike hotels, they are not always held to consistent fire safety standards. This bill helps close that gap by ensuring that every guest has the most basic protections in place.

The requirements outlined in this bill are not burdensome. They are reasonable, achievable, and lifesaving. Smoke alarms must function. Fire extinguishers must be available. Guests must know how to exit in an emergency. These are minimal expectations that can mean the difference between life and death.

Equally important, this bill establishes accountability through host responsibilities, booking platform notifications, and local inspection requirements. These measures ensure that safety is not optional or overlooked.

We cannot undo the devastating loss that inspired this legislation. But we can honor Jillian and Lindsay by taking action to protect others. Passing this bill would be a meaningful step toward preventing future tragedies and ensuring that no other family experiences such profound grief.

I urge you to support the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Vanessa Sperling
Rockville, MD