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## Written Testimony in Support of HB1221

Before the Maryland House of Delegates

March 5, 2026

My name is Jill Hammerschmidt, and I am writing in strong and heartfelt support of HB1221.

In 2022, two beautiful sisters, Jillian and Lindsay Weiner, were killed in a preventable fire while staying at a short-term rental property that did not have adequate fire safety protections in place.

Lindsay was just 19 years old. She had recently completed her freshman year at Tulane University and was excited about her future — her studies, her friendships, and all the promise that comes with being at the beginning of adulthood. My daughter, Emma, was Lindsay's high school classmate and best friend. They grew up together, sharing classes, milestones, laughter, and dreams for the future. Watching Emma grieve the sudden loss of someone who had been such an important part of her life has been devastating.

Jillian was a student at University of Michigan. She was intelligent, compassionate, and deeply devoted to her family and friends. Both young women were full of promise and possibility. They should still be here.

Their mother, Alisa Weiner — a dear friend of mine — has endured the unimaginable loss of both of her daughters. Yet even in her profound grief, she has chosen to turn heartbreak into action. HB1221 reflects that courage and that commitment to protecting other families.

This bill establishes clear, practical, and lifesaving fire safety standards for short-term rental units across Maryland. HB1221 would require rental units to:

- Install and maintain required smoke alarms, and ensure they are replaced under appropriate circumstances;
- Provide fire extinguishers within the unit;
- Post clearly visible evacuation diagrams so guests know how to exit in an emergency;
- Post emergency telephone numbers inside the unit for immediate access;
- Require booking services to notify short-term rental hosts of these fire safety requirements;
- Require counties and Baltimore City to implement inspections through local law or regulation and report compliance information to the State Fire Marshal; and
- Require the State Fire Marshal to report findings to the General Assembly to ensure oversight and accountability.

These are not excessive or burdensome measures. They are basic protections — the kinds of safeguards families reasonably assume are already in place when they book a place to stay. Clear exit information, working smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, inspections, and accountability can mean the difference between escape and tragedy.

The fire that took Jillian and Lindsay was not an unforeseeable event. It was compounded by the absence of fundamental safety measures. No family booking a short-term rental should have to question whether the home meets basic fire safety standards. No young adult away at college. No best friend on vacation. No mother sending her children on a trip.

Jillian and Lindsay's lives mattered. Their futures mattered. Passing HB1221 would not undo this loss, but it would honor their memory by helping to ensure that what happened to them does not happen to another family.

I respectfully urge you to support and pass HB1221. Let Maryland lead with compassion, responsibility, and a commitment to protecting every family who walks through the door of a short-term rental property.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jill Hammerschmidt

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