

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 to express my strong support for the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act.

This legislation fills an urgent and long-overlooked gap in the safety standards that protect travelers who rely on short-term rental properties. It calls for essential, commonsense safeguards — working smoke detectors, readily available fire extinguishers, clearly marked escape routes, and easy access to emergency instructions. These are basic protections that most of us assume exist wherever we stay, yet they are far from guaranteed.

My support for this bill is deeply personal. Jillian and Lindsay Wiener, whose tragic passing inspired this legislation, were cherished friends of our family. Their loss is devastating and, most painfully, it was avoidable. No family should ever suffer such a tragedy while simply staying in a place they believed to be safe.

Short-term rentals have become a standard part of how families travel, both in Maryland and nationwide. But unlike hotels, these properties are not consistently required to meet even the most fundamental fire safety standards. This bill closes that dangerous gap by ensuring that every guest, in every rental, has the minimum level of protection needed to stay safe.

The requirements outlined here are not excessive or difficult to meet. They are straightforward, reasonable, and capable of saving lives. Smoke alarms must work. Fire extinguishers must be accessible. Guests must be able to understand how to get out in an emergency. These are basic expectations that can determine whether people make it out safely when seconds matter.

Just as importantly, the bill creates clear accountability, through host obligations, booking-platform notifications, and local enforcement mechanisms, so safety cannot be ignored or treated as optional.

While nothing can undo the heartbreaking loss that led to this proposed legislation, we *can* honor Jillian and Lindsay by taking meaningful steps to protect others. Passing this bill would help prevent similar tragedies and spare other families from unimaginable grief.

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

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Sperling
Rockville, MD