

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the **Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act – BILL HB1221**, which would require all short-term rental properties in Maryland to include basic fire safety protections such as working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, clearly posted evacuation routes, and visible emergency phone numbers.

For me, this bill is not theoretical. It is heartbreakingly personal.

My dear friends, Alisa and Lew Wiener, and their family recently stayed in a short-term rental, trusting—as any family would—that the home met basic safety standards. Unbeknownst to them, the property lacked permits for electrical work. Even more devastating, it lacked a working smoke detector and basic fire safety precautions.

A fire broke out.

Their two daughters, Jillian and Lindsay Wiener, perished in that fire.

Jillian and Lindsay were beautiful, joyful, kind, and sweet. They were incredible daughters, loving sisters, and cherished friends to so many. They were just getting started with their lives — full of promises, dreams, and possibilities. Their loss is an unimaginable tragedy that no family should ever have to endure.

And what makes this even more painful is knowing that it may have been preventable.

Had there been properly permitted electrical work.

Had there been a functioning smoke detector.

Had there been clearly established and enforced safety standards in place for short-term rentals.

This bill represents common-sense protection that most Marylanders assume already exists.

When families rent a home, especially for a short stay, they have no practical way to inspect wiring, confirm permits, or verify safety systems. They rely on the law to ensure minimum standards.

This legislation would require basic fire safety precautions:

- Working smoke detectors
- Clearly posted fire evacuation routes
- Fire extinguishers
- Visible emergency contact information

These are not burdensome requirements. They are fundamental safeguards. They are the difference between early warning and no warning at all. Between escape and catastrophe. Short-term rental guests are uniquely vulnerable because they're unfamiliar with the layout of the home. In an emergency, seconds matter. Clear evacuation information and functioning alarms save lives.

The heartbreaking loss of Jillian and Lindsay underscores the urgent need for this bill. No other family should suffer such preventable devastation because basic safety measures were absent. Maryland CAN and MUST do better.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on the **Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act – BILL HB1221** and help ensure that every short-term rental in our state meets essential fire safety standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Lisa Schneider
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