

Written Testimony in Support of HB1221 – The Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short Term Rental Fire Safety Act

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1221, the Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act. I believe this legislation is both reasonable and necessary.

As a former Maryland resident and graduate of the University of Maryland, I return to the area often to visit family and friends. With a family of five, we frequently rely on short-term rentals during our visits. When families like mine choose a rental home, we do so with the expectation that it is not only welcoming, but safe. Peace of mind should never be optional.

This tragedy is deeply personal, as the Wiener family have been dear friends of mine for over 40 years. What should have been a joyful family vacation for them, instead became an unimaginable loss when a fire swept through their rental home and the smoke alarms were not functioning. Two of their three young adult children, Jillian and Lindsay, did not escape. It is impossible not to wonder how different that night might have been had working smoke alarms been in place.

It is entirely reasonable to expect that properties advertising smoke detectors have them properly installed and fully operational upon arrival. Ensuring that these life-saving devices are present and functioning should be the responsibility of the host, not the guest.

The obligation this bill creates is minimal, yet the protection it offers is profound. Other states and several Maryland counties already require safety inspections for short-term rental licenses. Establishing a consistent, statewide requirement for working smoke alarms is a logical and prudent step forward.

Working smoke alarms save lives. This legislation establishes a clear, commonsense safety standard — one that has the potential to prevent another family, maybe even your own family, from enduring such devastating loss. I strongly urge your support of Senate Bill 624.

Respectfully,

Robin Stelson Deegan