

SB 0970 - SUPPORT
C. Christine Ruffo
Silver Spring, MD

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**Fire Protection and Prevention- Sprinkler Systems and Smoke Alarms- Requirements
(Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act)
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee March 15, 2023**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am a long-time resident of Arrive–Silver Spring, and I support the passage of SB 0970 (Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act).

Thousands of people in my neighborhood—downtown Silver Spring—live in older high-rise buildings with insufficient fire safety systems. Before the terrible fire here on February 18 that took Melanie Diaz’s life, I don’t think many Arrive residents understood just how much our complex lacks compared with newer buildings. Some residents said they did not realize we do not have sprinklers. Many of us were shocked to realize a smoke-filled hallway would not trigger an alarm; that morning, a neighbor had to make his way through thick smoke to another floor to manually pull the alarm.

Sprinklers are essential, but until those can be installed, other measures included in this bill will greatly improve safety (hallway smoke alarms, in-unit extinguishers, mandated information about a lack of sprinklers included in leases, prohibiting landlords from requiring burdensome documentation before installing needed equipment for deaf and hard-of-hearing residents). We cannot wait 10 years for everyone to have sprinklers; we must require that those things that can be done quickly to improve safety, be done immediately.

I urge a favorable report on SB 0970.

Sincerely,

C. Christine Ruffo