

What You May Hear from Your Representative and How to Respond

After writing your Representative, odds are very good that you will receive a response from his/her office. But sometimes these letters can be filled with confusing information. Below we have listed some of the more common responses that are received and what they mean. Please note that persistence is key when communicating with your Representative. It may take several letters, phone calls, emails or meetings before they understand HD and cosponsor HR 678.

#1 - The “Non-Response” Response

In this response, the Representative usually thanks you for writing, explains a little bit about HD, and assures you that he will keep your thoughts in mind. The only problem? She doesn't answer your question about cosponsoring HR 678! Your Next Step: Please follow-up with a personal letter, call or email to the member of the Representative's staff responsible for health care. Restate your request and mention that the previous letter did not provide a clear cut answer to your question.

#2 - “I'll Vote for it on the Floor”

In this response, a Representative thanks you for writing and states that s/he will vote for HR 678 when it comes to the floor of the House for a vote. But that's not what you asked her to do; You asked her to cosponsor HR 678! Many members send responses like this because it sounds like they support your cause. However, HR 678 will probably never "come to the floor" for a vote. Instead, it will probably be incorporated into a larger health care bill. Your Next Step: Please follow-up with a personal letter, call or email to the member of the Representative's staff responsible for health care. Thank them for expressing support and restate your request for the Representative to cosponsor HR 678.

#3 - I'm On the Committee/Not on the Committee

In this response, a Representative will state that HR 678 has been referred to a committee for review. The Representative will also state (or imply) that because he is a member of that committee, he cannot cosponsor HR 678. Others will state (or imply) that because she is not on the committee, she cannot cosponsor HR 678. The fact is any Representative can cosponsor any bill, regardless of what committee they're on. Your Next Step: Please follow-up with a personal letter, call or email to the member of the Representative's staff responsible for health care. Thank them for expressing support and restate your request for the Representative to cosponsor HR 678.

#4 - Look What Else I am Doing!

In this response, a Representative will not answer if they will cosponsor HR 678. Instead, s/he mention other bills they have supported in the past. This may include funding for medical research at the National Institutes of Health, health care reform or something else. While we appreciate their support of these efforts, what we really want to know is...will s/he cosponsor HR 678? Your Next Step: Please follow-up with a personal letter, call or email to the member of the Representative's staff responsible for health care. Restate your request and mention that the previous letter did not provide a specifically answer to your question.

For the name of your Rep.'s staff member, please contact Jane Kogan at jkogan@hdsa.org