



# TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO ACTION ALERTS When Writing Your Legislators

**Address your letter directly** to the Senator/Assemblyperson

**Use People First Language** when discussing your loved one.

- i.e. My son Charlie has a developmental disability.  
*NOT:* My developmentally disabled son Charlie.

**State that you are a constituent** and the town in which you live.

**State what the issue is** and keep the message short and simple. Try to stick to one or two key issues.

**Include extra information** with the letter (i.e. fact sheets, statistics, etc.) if you have them.

**State why the issue matters to you** and how it will affect your family.

**Ask for a response.**

- i.e. “I hope I can count on your vote. Please get back to me with an answer.”

**Always be polite** and thank them for considering your issue.

John Smith  
212 Mulberry Road  
East Bumblebee, NJ 01010  
April 10, 2015

The Honorable Jane Johnson  
101 Governor Way  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Senator/Assemblyperson Johnson,

My name is John Smith and I am the father of a 37 year old man, Charlie, with a developmental disability. I live in East Bumblebee, NJ. My son is a wonderful young man, loving, kind, and a hard worker. He works part-time at Red Lobster here in East Bumblebee. We are very proud of him. All of the actives and programs Charlie is involved with could not be possible without his devoted and caring direct support staff.

In the last few years Charlie's progress towards independence continues to amaze us. For the past 37 years my wife and I have remained his sole fulltime caregivers. This is a 24/7 position that we lovingly accept. About a year ago, Charlie attended his first overnight weekend respite (an overnight getaway for him and a break from caregiving for his mother and I). We were nervous at first, but the staff assured us that everything would be fine. The entire weekend the staff sent us photos and updates.

Day in and day out direct support staff make sure the individuals they work with are safe, happy and well cared for. Please support a 3% true cost of care increase for community providers (the agencies that employ direct support staff) to cover the true cost of care.

By supporting a 3% increase in true cost of care

- Community providers can continue to provide high quality care to people with developmental disabilities
- You will help lower employee turnover rates resulting in continuity care.
- You will help build a stronger provider network, which will allow my son to make even more progress toward a more independent life.

Thank you for your time,

John Smith

## Sample Letter