**Opportunity 3 - Letter to a Rep**

For this opportunity, you will be writing a real letter to one of the following California representatives:

Senator Kamala Harris

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Representative Mark DeSaulnier (11th District)

You will be graded on the following:

* Clearly introduce yourself and topic
* Show clear understanding of your topic and its effects on the minority community you are focused on
* Show strong use of significant and relevant facts and evidence
* Clear and varied transitions
* Clearly written in appropriate standard English
  + few grammatical/spelling errors
* Organization shows a clear plan
* Use of academic language and vocabulary specific to the topic

**Suggested Format:**

Date  
  
Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

1. Who you are (Name, age, district – any general credentials) and what issue you are writing about – be specific
2. Why you feel this way about this issue and how it affects you, your community, or the minority group you are focused on – facts over emotion
3. What you hope will happen – what action should be taken

4. Invite them to the presentation

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your City, State, Zip

**Kamala Harris:**

A lifelong public safety and civil rights leader, Senator-elect Kamala D. Harris is the first African American and first woman to serve as Attorney General of California and the second African American woman to be elected to the United States Senate in history.

Throughout her career as a prosecutor, Harris has been a tireless advocate for the most voiceless and vulnerable Californians.

As California’s Attorney General, Harris prosecuted transnational gangs exploiting women and children and trafficking in guns and drugs and led comprehensive studies on the impacts of transnational criminal organizations and human trafficking in California.

Harris fought for Californians hit hardest during the state and national mortgage crisis, won $20 billion for homeowners, created a multidivisional Mortgage Fraud Strike Force to crack down on fraud and passed the “Homeowners Bill of Rights,” establishing the nation’s most comprehensive anti-foreclosure protections.

Harris has worked intensively to protect children and students.   She established California’s Bureau of Children’s Justice and fought to reduce elementary school truancy so that every California child can exercise his or her constitutional right to an education.  As Attorney General, Harris successfully sued predatory for-profit colleges scamming students and veterans.

Harris aggressively defended the rights of consumers.  She won major settlements for consumers, forged innovative agreements with the technology industry to improve privacy protections and cracked down on piracy and online crime.  Harris also fought to protect California’s environment, prosecuted polluters, helped win marriage equality for all Californians and defended the Affordable Care Act.

Throughout her career, Harris has been a leading advocate for innovation and reform in the criminal justice system.  Harris worked to increase the adoption of technology and data-driven policing to assist law enforcement in the efficient investigation and prosecution of crime, established the first Office of Recidivism Reduction and Reentry and pioneered the nation’s first open data initiative to expose racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

Harris served two terms as District Attorney of San Francisco. Defeating a two-term incumbent, she was first elected DA in 2003, and was overwhelmingly elected to a second term in November 2007.

Harris began her career in the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office, where she specialized in prosecuting child sexual assault cases. In 1998, she joined the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office, where she led the Career Criminal Unit. She also served as the head of the San Francisco City Attorney’s Division on Children and Families.

Born in Oakland, California, Harris is a graduate of Howard University, America’s oldest historically black university. She received her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. She is married to Doug Emhoff and is the author of the book Smart on Crime: A Career Prosecutor's Plan to Make Us Safer.

**Dianne Fienstien:**

As California's senior Senator, Dianne Feinstein has built a reputation as an independent voice, working with both Democrats and Republicans to find commonsense solutions to the problems facing California and the nation.  
 Since her election to the Senate in 1992, Senator Feinstein has worked in a bipartisan way to build a significant record of legislative accomplishments, helping strengthen the nation's security at home and abroad, combat crime and violence, battle cancer and protect natural resources in California and across the country.  
 In 2009, Senator Feinstein assumed chairmanship of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, where she oversaw the nation’s 16 intelligence agencies. She was the first female Senator to hold that position. As chairman, Feinstein oversaw the passage of six intelligence authorization bills following a five-year drought. The committee also approved a key bipartisan report on the Benghazi attacks and released key information about the CIA's detention and interrogation program following a six-year review. Today, Senator Feinstein serves as vice chairman of the committee, during which time the committee passed the first significant congressional legislation to address security flaws in our nation's cybersecurity.   
 Senator Feinstein is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee where she is ranking member on the Subcommittee on Energy and Water. She is also a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, which she chaired during the 110th Congress. In that capacity, Senator Feinstein was the first woman to chair the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies and presided over the inauguration of President Barack Obama on January 20, 2009.  
 In addition to her official committee assignments, Senator Feinstein is co-chairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, co-chairman of the Senate Cancer Coalition and co-chairman of the Senate Women’s Caucus on Burma. She is also a member of the Anti-Meth Caucus, the Congressional Dairy Caucus and the Congressional Former Mayors Caucus. She has served as a member of the Aspen Strategy Group since 1997.

**Mark DeSaulnier:**

****Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (DE-SOWN-YAY) represents California’s 11th Congressional District. He was sworn-in as a member of the 114th Congress on January 6, 2015 and was appointed to serve on the Education and the Workforce and Oversight and Government Reform Committees.

For more than 20 years, Mark has been a strong voice for reform and has developed a reputation for taking on the tough causes while seeking to make government more accessible and transparent to all Californians. He is a leader on issues of importance to working families including guaranteeing a livable wage, ensuring education is affordable and accessible, making investments in job training, and keeping good paying jobs here at home.

Prior to being elected to Congress, DeSaulnier served in the California State Senate where as Chair of the Transportation and Housing Committee he fought for greater accountability on the state’s transportation infrastructure projects including the Bay Bridge, and was a strong advocate for safe and efficient transportation systems. He also founded the Select Committee on Excellence, Innovation, and Accountability in State Government as a means to examine the ways to improve state government to more efficiently and effectively deliver services to California citizens. Mark also served in the State Assembly and received the distinction of being the first freshman in history to chair the Assembly Transportation Committee.

During his time in the state legislature, Mark championed issues that impact the most vulnerable populations of California, introducing legislation to support underserved, homeless, and foster youth, and founded the Ending Poverty and Inequality in California Caucus. He also fought to safeguard against corporate tax giveaways, to end prescription drug abuse, and to protect homeowners against foreclosure. He was a proponent of more stringent guidelines to prevent the use of harmful, toxic pesticides in schools, and worked to foster regional coordination as a co-chair of the Bay Area Caucus. From 2008 to 2014, during the time he was in the state legislature, 61 of Mark’s bills were passed and became California state law.

DeSaulnier served locally as a Concord City Councilmember and as Mayor. He was appointed to the Concord Planning Commission and was a member of the University of California Toxic Substances Research and Teaching Program Advisory Committee. While serving on the City Council, DeSaulnier was appointed to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, where he was re-elected three times. As Supervisor, he served on the California Air Resources Board, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Mark championed several local transportation issues including the Expansion of Highway 4, BART to eastern Contra Costa County, and the development of a fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel.

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, DeSaulnier earned his BA in History from the College of the Holy Cross. As a young man in Massachusetts, Congressman DeSaulnier worked for the Boston juvenile court, as a warehouse worker, and as a hotel services employee. DeSaulnier was a member of both the Teamsters International Union and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union. In the early 1970s Mark moved to California. Over the next 35 years, DeSaulnier would own and manage several successful Bay Area restaurants. Mark has been a small business owner most of his career.

Congressman DeSaulnier lives in Concord where he raised his two sons, Tristan and Tucker. He is an avid runner and has completed twenty-one marathons.