**Part B - Position Letter Guidelines and Tips**

**Midterm:** After reading a number of reports and articles on the state of public school education, you are required to write a position letter to Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and recommend 3 policy interventions to help address the issues.

To recap, a position letter is an actionable tool any activist or community organizer can use to communicate policy prescriptions to an elected official who can do something about the problem. The language contained within must be respectful, but direct (no flossing or being indirect with your recommendations). Make sure to incorporate the preparation listed below.

**How to craft a position letter**

Before you begin to write your position letter, it is advisable to identify key points of the social justice issue you want offer recommendations about to an elected official.

For example, if I was writing a position letter on the issue of homelessness, I should begin by researching the issue and I might identify 3 main issues like 1) City shelter system is unsafe and unsanitary 2)City needs to build more single-person transitional housing 3)City needs more financial investments in City’s affordable housing stock. Next step is to think of policy changes (policy modification) or develop new policies (policy prescriptions) to address or fix the 3 issues identified. Those policy changes or policy prescriptions will be my recommendations to fix the

**Letter Formatting**

Make sure to include the elected official’s address and date in the top left corner as most of you have done. PLEASE be sure to pick an elected official who is most suited or able to do something about the problem. You are permitted to include more than one elected official by carbon copying (cc’ed).

**Introduction**

It is usually prudent for any activist to identify themselves as a constituent of one of the addressees in the first part of your introduction.

Within the first paragraph of your position letter, you must be direct and tell the official why you are writing and what your position/recommendation is. Example – “I am writing you this letter to request that you vote against the upcoming City Council vote on closing Rikers. I have closely followed this issue over the last couple of weeks….”

**Body**

1. You should organize the body of the letter such that you have 3 main paragraphs to make a convincing case to the officials. Each paragraph should restate the issue and any statistics that can explain it.
2. Then, in the same paragraph, you should indicate a policy recommendation/modification that can fix the problem. Make sure to cite, cite, cite. The policy prescription is one area you may not need to cite if its your idea. However, if the policy prescription can be found in the report (New York’s Ferguson Problem) or other online sources, then you must cite it. It only makes your case stronger! Please only use digital sources from reputable sources.

**Conclusion**

The final paragraph in your position letter is the conclusion and two paragraphs for this section is good. Please don’t do a good job of developing your entire letter only to have a weak ending paragraph!

1) The concluding paragraph is a very important one where you basically re-list your policy prescriptions you have identified in the body of the letter and restate that your recommendations will better address them.

2) You could also invite the elected official to reach you for a meeting to further discuss the problems (this will also be significant progress for your issue as an advocate!). Sign off as you will any letter with ‘Yours Sincerely’ and your name underneath.

**Footnotes versus List of References**

**I have given you the option of using Microsoft’s ‘footnote’ function to make in text citations. If you do that you won’t need a final list of references as the last page of your position letter. It may be easiest for most of you to use the same in-text citation scheme you used for your report (Part A). If you use regular MLA or APA in-text citation to document your sources, then you must have a final list of references used as a last page, or you will lose easy points.**