Guidelines for Letter to Congress Revision

• Write to the representative from your congressional district (only write to Dan Maffei if you are an international student)
• Be sure to format your letter in letter format, with an address, greeting, closing, and properly formatted paragraphs (see the example letter on the website)
• Find out what committees your representative serves on and use this information to tailor your letter to them
• Be clear about why you are writing the letter, emphasize your main point in the opening and make sure the rest of the letter addresses this main point in some way and does not wander from the topic
• There is no length requirement for the revised letter, this will allow you to be as concise as possible. Nearly all of your original letters can benefit from being cut down in length to make them more straightforward
• Focus on saying only what really needs to be said in the most direct way possible, remove any “fluff” that does not directly address the topic you are writing about
• Avoid superfluous phrases such as “I believe”, “It is clear that”, “It is important to realize”, etc, which do not add any content to your writing
• Avoid using an informal or conversational tone
• Make use of visual organization, using lists, bullet points, and bold text as in the example letter on the website. Use these to call attention to your main message and points of argument, so that the letter can be quickly scanned through while still conveying your message effectively
• There is a potential for bonus points on the revision (up to 60/50 points) if your revised letter follows all of these guidelines and is significantly improved as a result
• See Ryan or Prof. Hayes in their office hours for assistance with your revisions. Issues with the content/subject matter of your letter should be addressed to Prof. Hayes. Ryan can provide feedback on organization, clarity, etc