



## CONGRESSWOMAN JUDY CHU

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### **Congressional Leaders Call for Hearings into Military Hazing**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Following recent high-profile military hazing cases, members of the House of Representatives, family members of victims, and a community advocate joined forces today to call for immediate action from the highest levels in the military to stop hazing. Members also called for Congressional hearings on the military's effort to prevent hazing. Representatives Judy Chu (CA-32), Adam Smith (WA-09), Mike Honda (CA-15), and Barbara Lee (CA-09) were joined on Capitol Hill by Tom Hayashi, Interim Executive Director of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA). Carmen Lew, sister of Lance Corporal Harry Lew, who took his own life after enduring hazing and aggressive treatment from fellow marines while serving in Afghanistan, spoke at the conference by phone. Congressional leaders released the following statements about today's event:

**Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32):** "This is a call for justice. Too many patriotic young people, who only want to serve our country, are being harmed. The highest military officials must make eliminating hazing a top priority. They must stop pretending there is no problem. None of this will change until the Secretary of Defense commits to eradicate the culture of hazing that is so ingrained within our troops. Service members in positions of responsibility in the field must be made to feel that they should stop hazing when they see it, rather than encourage it, or turn the other way. The perpetrators of hazing must be punished."

**Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15):** "I want to thank my courageous friend and colleague, Congresswoman Chu, for calling this press conference on military hazing. Everything I know about the facts of this case tells me that the hand slap sentencing of Lance Corporal Jacoby is wrong. Clearly, the system at the Department of Defense to deal with hazing does not work. The tragic death of Harry Lew is an urgent call to action. The crucial issue of hazing in the military must be addressed immediately. The brave men and women of our armed services must serve within a system that guarantees their protection and their families' trust in their superiors."

"Lance Corporal Harry Lew's parents are my constituents. And our community has shared in their terrible loss. Many difficult questions still remain on this tragic incident, Private Danny

Chen's case, and many similar hazing cases in the military. There is no doubt that the Lew and Chen families feel betrayed by our military, and I am sure this is the same for many other families and communities. We must restore that trust for their sake and for all of our military families.

"I know – from meeting with Harry Lew's parents – how much it meant to Harry to serve his nation in uniform. We must act now to ensure that the Department of Defense has effective diversity training and stricter enforcement policies to guarantee that our service members – no matter their background – are able to safely and honorably defend the citizens and the Constitution of the United States. We call on the House Committees on Armed Services and Oversight and Government Reform to take these warnings seriously and hold hearings in order to protect our brave service members from any future danger."

**Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-09):** "My heart goes out to all the victims of hazing, as well as their families and loved ones. The tragic deaths of Harry Lew and Danny Chen must not go unrecognized. A thorough investigation must be conducted to review the circumstances surrounding these terrible incidents. Further, it is critical that a top to bottom review is conducted of all the branches of the armed services so that we can begin to understand just how widespread hazing is in the military. The racism that fueled the hazing of Harry Lew and Danny Chen does not reflect the values of our armed services, nor does it reflect American values, and we must not allow another soldier in the U.S. armed forces to endure abusive hazing ever again."

**OCA Interim Executive Director Tom Hayashi:** "OCA is gravely concerned about the health and well being of Asian and Pacific Island (API) personnel currently serving our nation. We are also adamant about seeing that justice is served for cases involving extreme forms of harassment. We call on the Department of Defense to commit to a zero tolerance policy regarding harassment, identify risk factors that create hostile environments, review their procedures for trying individuals in hazing cases, and develop appropriate communications outreach to the API community."

Today's conference follows repeated efforts by the above members of Congress to raise awareness on this pressing issue. Most recently, they sent letters to the House Armed Services Committee and Oversight and Government Reform Committee requesting hearings into the adequacy of the military's hazing prevention policies.

To view the letter sent to the House Armed Services Committee, [click here](#).

To view the letter sent to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, [click here](#).