



April 26, 2016

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith:

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) is a coalition of 35 national Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander organizations that represents the interests of our communities. We are alarmed by the increase in incidents of racially-based bullying, hazing, and abuse in the military targeting Asian Americans, and therefore, we strongly support the Speier amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. This amendment is based on Representative Judy Chu's Harry Lew Military Hazing Accountability and Prevention Act of 2016, and we urge the House Armed Services Committee to adopt it.

Asian Americans experience bullying and harassment in the military. For example, in April 2011, Lance Corporal Harry Lew, the nephew of Representative Judy Chu, shot himself to death in a foxhole in Afghanistan after brutal hazing by fellow Marines. In October 2011, Private Danny Chen took his own life after weeks of racially-charged abuse and mistreatment by fellow Army platoon members.

A February 2016 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the current status of hazing in the military (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-226>) found that United States Department of Defense (DOD) anti-hazing policies are not effective due to a lack of oversight or regular monitoring of policy implementation. It also found that data collection on reported incidents and tracking are inconsistent, limiting the DOD's ability to evaluate and effectively target efforts to address hazing.

NCAPA is outraged by what happened to Lance Corporal Lew and Private Chen, and we are concerned that much more needs to be done to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future.

The Speier amendment would ensure that steps are taken to address the inconsistencies found in the GAO report. Specifically, it would 1) require DOD to submit an annual report to Congress to ensure anti-hazing policies are implemented consistently; 2) require DOD to improve existing training to help servicemembers better identify and respond to hazing at all command levels; 3) mandate that DOD issue a department-wide guidance on a comprehensive and consistent data

collection system that includes information on protected classes such as race and religion; and 4) evaluate the prevalence of hazing through department-wide surveys.

These provisions are necessary to eliminate hazing in the military. We cannot condone racially-based harassment, bullying, or hazing anywhere, and especially not against the brave men and women who are serving and protecting our nation. We urge your support for the Speier amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Kang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Kang
National Director