

**House Armed Services Committee
Members Hearing for the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act
April 17, 2011**

Testimony of Congressman Michael Honda (CA-15)

I want to thank Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and the distinguished members of the House Armed Services Committee for allowing me to testify in support of my priority for the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act - hazing and harassment prevention in the U.S. military.

From recent tragic cases such as Lance Corporal Harry Lew and Private Danny Chen, I believe that the U.S. military has fallen into a culture that is blind to the damages that hazing and harassment cause to our own service members. Their tragic deaths are urgent calls to action. The crucial issue of hazing and harassment in the military must be addressed immediately and the culture that tolerates them must be reversed. The brave men and women of our armed services must be able to serve within a system that guarantees their protection and ensures their families' trust in their superiors.

I am grateful to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel for recognizing the important need to address hazing in the military by recently holding a hearing regarding this concern. As an invited member, I was glad to hear the witnesses representing each service denounce hazing and harassment and give broad overviews of their service's preventative safeguards. Yet, these safeguards apparently are not adequate and hazing and harassment occurs, as evident by the recent incidents of Private Danny Chen and Lance Corporal Harry Lew. In fact, Secretary Panetta issued an anti-hazing directive during his holiday message in December.

What I found extremely troubling from the testimony is the lack of actual statistics on hazing and harassment. How can anyone be convinced that a problem does not exist or current prevention policies are working if there is no method to monitor and evaluate it? Furthermore, a definition of hazing and harassment is either lacking or inconsistent within the services.

For these reasons, many of my colleagues and I are convinced substantial efforts are needed to eradicate hazing and harassment in the military. In a letter to the Committee dated April 3, 2011, the Tri-Caucus requested your committee's consideration of the following:

1. Statutory Definition of Hazing in the Uniform Code of Military Justice
2. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on each of the services' hazing prevention policies and the prevalence and consequences of hazing over the last five years.
3. National hazing database that tracks incidents of hazing and an annual report to Congress on the military's progress in responding to hazing.

I know from meeting with Harry Lew's parents, my constituents, 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 and continuous training for all ranks, proper oversight by and access to leadership, 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. I thank you for your consideration of my requests.