

Our Country's Failure to Stop Hazing in the Military

Written by Mike Honda

The U.S. military failed Lance Corporal Harry Lew and his grieving family, my constituents. On April 3, 2011, LCpl Lew took his own life shortly after enduring over three hours of alleged hazing and aggressive treatment from his fellow Marines. Last Friday, the final court-martial concluded for the third Marine charged in the Lew case. The military jury acquitted Lance Corporal Carlos Orozco of all charges; a similar verdict for Sergeant Benjamin Johns during an earlier court-martial. In fact, only LCpl Jacob Jacoby received any type of punishment after pleading guilty for assault on Lew. The sentence was little more than a slap on the hand – 30 days confinement and reduction in pay grade.

The tragic hazing-related incidents and deaths of LCpl Harry Lew, Private Danny Chen, and many others are an urgent call to action. The crucial issue of hazing in the military must be addressed immediately and the culture of hazing tolerance must be reversed. I stand by my dear friend and colleague, Representative Judy Chu, in calling for congressional hearings to address military hazing and the need for a mandate of zero tolerance for all forms of harassment in our armed services. The brave men and women of our U.S. military must be able to serve within a system that guarantees their protection and their families' trust in their superiors.