

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 1, 2015

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Carter:

As leaders of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC)—also known as the Tri-Caucus—we write to express our deep concern over reports of longstanding and continued racial-based hazing in the military.

Last month, *Army Times* reported a shocking practice in the 2nd Platoon, C Company, 3rd Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment known as “Racial Thursdays.”<sup>1</sup> This terrible practice allows the platoon’s soldiers to use racial slurs against each other on Thursdays, without consequence. Allegedly, the unit not only condoned “Racial Thursdays,” but also encouraged such racial hazing amongst its soldiers.

We were even more appalled to learn that this behavior came from the same unit to which Army Private Danny Chen belonged. Private Chen committed suicide on October 3, 2011 while deployed to Afghanistan. Military investigators found that Private Chen was subject to racial taunts over his Chinese ethnicity and endured physical attacks on a daily basis for six weeks before he took his own life.

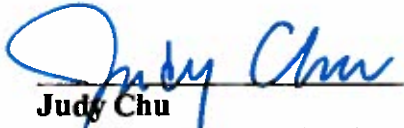
We uphold the military to the highest moral standards, and the fact that hazing continues without impunity in your ranks is completely incompatible with the ideals of equality and respect we champion as a nation. Our brave service members risk their lives to serve our country, and it is unacceptable that they continue to face the threat of hazing and racial taunting from their fellow soldiers, with little to no intervention from their command.

We are encouraged that the Army is investigating the allegations surrounding “Racial Thursdays” and request that you update us on what steps the military is taking to eradicate hazing at all levels of its branches. We would like to discuss this urgent matter with you and respectfully request a meeting at your earliest convenience. We must put an end to this demeaning culture of racism and hazing in the military, and we look forward to working with you to find effective solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> “Army Investigates Alleged ‘Racial Thursdays’ at Unit,” *Army Times* (March 19, 2015), available at <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/03/18/army-race-investigation-unit/24994093/>

Sincerely,




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**Judy Chu**  
*Chair, Congressional Asian  
Pacific American Caucus*



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**G.K. Butterfield**  
*Chair, Congressional Black  
Caucus*



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**Linda Sánchez**  
*Chair, Congressional Hispanic  
Caucus*