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Congress of the United States
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Senior Whip

October 24, 2016

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

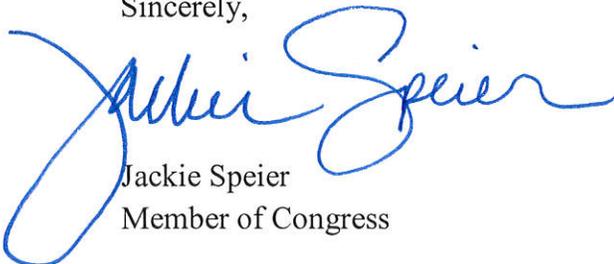
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2264 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith:

I am concerned about the recent media reports depicting a culture of hazing and abuse at the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot. These media reports seem to be indicative of a larger, pervasive hazing problem that has harmed soldiers' mental health, caused serious injury, diminished unit cohesion, and even cost lives. Unfortunately, for all the tragic examples, we still lack a clear understanding of hazing and the military's response. According to the GAO, the Department of Defense does not even know the extent of hazing in the organizations because they have not conducted an evaluation of its prevalence, nor developed a unified system to track the instances of hazing department wide.

As you may know, this is an important issue for me. It's why I introduced legislation into the FY2017 NDAA aimed at identifying and combating military hazing. I understand that there will be investigations into the most recent incidents and we should not interfere with that. However, it is incumbent upon us in our oversight role to determine the extent to which this is a systemic problem and make sure the military is doing everything in its power to prevent cases like this from happening again. For that reason, I am requesting that you direct the Armed Services Committee or the Military Personnel Subcommittee to hold a hearing on this topic. This will not only provide us with greater insights into the problem, but also give the Department of Defense an opportunity to discuss what specific actions they are taking to prevent further incidents of hazing. I thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to the hearing.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Joseph Heck

Chairman

Military Personnel Subcommittee

The Honorable Susan Davis

Ranking Member

Military Personnel Subcommittee