Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Lisha Chai, resident of Groton, Connecticut. I am writing to testify in regard of Bill No. SB359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”.

I and my family support the original concept of “prohibiting educational institutions or other state agencies from mandatory collection and separation of data from students by subpopulations of national origin or ethnicity”. However, we are very concerned in regard of this portion of the current bill language “unless… collected uniformly across the entire population of students”. I believe the entire population shall NOT be subject to registry of ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin.

Equality is one of the core values that attracted me to come to the States about 18 years ago. After 18 years of personal and family effort, we have settled on this land and raised our three lovely children. Without any doubt, this is still the land and the nation, as Dr. King said, for our children to live where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

My two daughters and one son were all born in States and they all always think they are Americans and love this country forever. America is a country of immigrants. Generations of immigrants have contributed, enriched and reshaped a constantly evolving identity of being Americans. But it is one identity nevertheless. This is why we strongly support legislation that ban labelling kids (or anyone) as perpetual foreigners in name of data collection. We don’t want to see one day some policies and practices are formed based upon one’s nation of origin or ethnicity which most of the time meant well, but can lead to discrimination and cause harm. We don’t want him/her to be seen as “another kind of American”. This great nation was built upon the notion that “All men are created equal”.

Race and ethnicity should never be criteria to categorize people.

Please modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin”. Please vote for Bill SB359.

Thank you in advance for your favorable consideration!

Yours truly,

Lisha Chai