March 07, 2018

Dear Honorable Members of Education Committee,

Hello, my name is Silvia Chen. I am 13 years old and currently an 8th grader at West Side Middle School. I’ve lived in America for the entirety of my life. I fully support the original concept of bill No. SB 359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic.”

I don’t enjoy being classified specifically on my ethnicity. This bill would mean that I would be stereotyped more as a Chinese person, and not American. What’s the difference between us? Both Whites and Chinese are born in America each day, yet Whites aren’t classified into subgroups like Caucasian and White Hispanic but us Asians are.

I’ve experienced a lot of criticism for being Chinese, even though I was born and raised in America. People have commented, “You’re asian, you’re supposed to be smart”, “Hey Silvia, have you ever eaten dog?”, and mocking joked, “Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, etc.” while pulling at both of their eyelids to indicate the stereotypical asian eyes. Others students have pointed at my friends, also Asians, and laughed at them, doing strange postures and saying incoherent words to ‘act’ as an asian. I don’t understand the reason for racism. Why are people always divided by race and ethnicity? The Declaration of Independence clearly states that “All men are created equal”. I should have the same rights and treatment as a normal American citizen. I was born and raised in America, yet I’ve been treated differently and labeled as ‘Asian’ and not ‘American’. Racism is something that has always existed. In the past, darker skinned people were the ones labeled and were segregated from the fairer skinned. It’s like history repeating over again, but this time with Asians. Why is this? America is supposed to be a country of free and equal citizens, but the part of equality never really happens.

A bill stating the requirement information of people from the Asian ethnicity should be vetoed. I suppose I understand the reason for background information as this type of data would help our country be safe from harm, but if data needs to be collected, it should only be for important research. Disaggregating Asians only and specifically is racist and highly unnecessary. Having background checks of people based on their looks is uncalled for and people shouldn’t be stereotyped or categorized because of how they appear.

In the Middle East, the war in Syria and the areas around it is still occurring as of now. Not only that, immigration from people all around the world are coming to America for freedom, and I specifically repeat, for freedom. If America is segregating race from one
another, then immigrants would far better in a country that doesn’t require the disaggregation of specific types of people.

Our country of America is founded under the laws of freedom, and the rights of all. “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” This is stated in the Declaration of Independence for when the 13 colonies separated from Great Britain. Our country of America should be a country of equal rights. I hope as an American student that loves my county, that a bill(SB 359) prevents racist disaggregation should be passed.

Sincerely

Silvia Chen
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