March 3, 2018

Honorable Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Deborah Herbst and I am a lifelong resident of the state of Connecticut. I am a retired educator and elementary principal with forty years of service in the public schools. I am a strong advocate for all children. I am writing to testify in regard to the bill No. SB359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”

I support the original concept of “prohibiting educational institutions or other state agencies from the mandatory collection and separation of data from students by subpopulations of national origins or ethnicity”. However the current language, “unless collected uniformly across the entire population of students” can potentially be problematic down the road. I believe the entire student population should not be subjected to the registry of ancestry or immigration from their nation of origin. The uniform collection of such data is certain to be flawed in the absences of checks and balances. Equity might not always be achieved.

Children have been my life. I experienced great joy teaching elementary children. In my eyes children are all children regardless of race, creed, color, or nation of origin. They are children of the United States of America and should be treated as such. Some of our greatest minds can be found in all children from many different backgrounds. We live in a diverse society and this should always be respected. This is our world. This type registry will only discriminate. We teach children to embrace differences in people and here we are trying to do otherwise. We should be setting a very different example. All children are our greatest treasure and our future.

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

Thank you,
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