March 6, 2018

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

• My name is Dr. Grace Kao and I am a voter living the town of Woodbridge, CT. I am Professor of Sociology, Faculty Director of Education Studies, and Director of the Center for Empirical Research on Stratification and Inequality at Yale University. I have conducted research on the Asian American Population for the past 25 years. I am submitting this testimony to oppose SB 359, which prevents the public school information system from disaggregating student data by ethnic subgroups. The ability to examine data in subgroups by race and ethnicity is critical to being able to track outcomes and target interventions to improve negative outcomes.

• The language in SB 359 would limit our state’s ability to disaggregate data on two conditions: 1) if it is federally mandated or 2) if the data is uniformly collected for all ethnic subgroups for all students in the state. Connecticut should have the choice to disaggregate data in a manner that makes sense for our unique needs. SB 359’s first condition subjects our state choice to federal mandates. SB 359’s second condition creates an impossible standard and thus prohibits disaggregating data, since data is currently not collected from all students in the state (i.e. home schooled and private school students). Our state has a right to our own collected data, and we should retain a choice in how it is aggregated. These limits remove Connecticut’s ability to choose how to aggregate our community data.

• The United States is a land of opportunity and regardless of race, ethnicity, or primary language, our students should have the resources necessary to succeed. Disaggregated data will allow us the opportunity to better monitor the communities that need the most help, so that all students are provided the opportunity to succeed no matter their family educational status or income.

• Please oppose SB 359 and ensure that every child has an equal access to quality education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Grace Kao
Professor of Sociology
Faculty Director, Education Studies
Director, Center for Empirical Research on Stratification and Inequality (CERSI)