I am speaking as a parent residing in Manchester, CT and on behalf of Uniting for a Safe Inclusive Community – Manchester, a grassroots community organization working to ensure that all of our citizens feel welcomed and supported. In particular, we work to amplify the voices of members of marginalized groups in our community.

I am concerned about the education of our children and in particular I am concerned about the disparity between the educational opportunities and outcomes of children in marginalized communities versus those that are members of the mainstream majority culture.

We all understand that there is an opportunity gap, and the way that we understand this is because of the data that we are able to collect. Without the ability to collect data, we will be unable to determine where we have issues that need to be addressed and if we have been able to address them effectively.

Collecting this type of data does not need to be mandatory, and any family that does not feel comfortable providing such data should certainly be able to opt out, unless the information is required by federal law. But this type of data collection should also not be prohibited by the State. If the State does prohibit the collection of this type of data, then we will have one less tool at our disposal to reduce the structural disparities currently present in our educational systems.

Please do not take tools out of our hands to level the playing field for all of our children.

Thank you.

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