Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Shelly Li. I am a Senior Principal Scientist of Pfizer, Inc, a naturalized citizen and resident of East Lyme, CT. I am writing to testify in regard to Bill No. SB359, “An Act Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System.”

I strongly 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, I am concerned with the following portion of the current bill language: “unless … collected uniformly across the entire population of students”. I firmly believe the entire population shall not be subject to registry of ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin.

I am supporting the original concept of Bill 359 because I believe “mandatory collection and separation of data from students by subpopulations of national origin or ethnicity” is fundamentally against American value of equality. The United States is a nation of immigrants. It was built upon the notion “All Men are created equal.” Generations of immigrants came here from all over the world to pursue the same American dream. As Dr. King once famously said, “I have a dream that my four little children one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character.” I am testifying in the same spirit. I want my 11-year-old son to be able to go to school without being judged by the color of his skin or his ancestry country of origin, but by the content of his character.

Opponents of this bill may claim disaggregation of student data by ethnic or racial subgroups will better serve certain communities. I strongly disagree with such claims. I believe such disaggregation will be harmful to all communities. Throughout history, people suffered in various ways due to registry of Ancestry nation of origin and ethnic origin. Even with the best intention in mind, disaggregation will lead to subpopulation profiling and discrimination. Race and ethnicity should never be criteria to categorize people, especially not our children. Students should be able to go to school feeling welcome and free to learn and share. They should never be subjected to circumstances where they feel different from their peers at school.

I thereby strongly urge the committee to modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin” and vote FOR Bill No. SB359.

Thank you so much for your favorable consideration!

Respectfully yours,

Shelly Li