Dear Honorable Education Committee members,

This is Prof. Jun Lin to file the testimony in support of SB359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic”. I am a resident of Ridgefield, CT. My professional background is a tenured business professor with training in behavior science. I am a father of three kids in grades 7th, 10th, and 11th. I am also the founding principal of the largest Chinese school in the Fairfield County and greater New York area, and currently serve as the Board Chair. Under these capacity, I have been working with hundreds of Chinese families and over a thousand school age kids and understand their needs and best interests.

Children with any cultural heritage, who were born and raised in the U.S., are foremost American. Any attempt to divide and label them according to their ancestral or ethnic origins will do enormous harm to them. First, Asian registry will reinforce any stereotype about Asian people. Asian children have already been under tremendous pressure because of the stereotype of being “model minority”. They work hard, but their achievement would be discounted just because they are Asian, and the bar has been much higher for them (such as in college entrance tests). It hurts the social equality and equity. More seriously, Asian kids are often treated as “less American” compared to their white peers. While people are fighting against such stereotype, Asian Registry policy will make things much worse. It will fortify the Asian stereotype instead of improving the situation and do even grave damage to the future generations and the America value in the long run. They would become “perpetual foreigners” with the ancestral origin label attached to them generation by generation.

Second, children born and raised here have nothing but cultural association with their ancestral origin. However, such Asian registry labeling exposes the Asian community to unexpected hazards. Due to the Cold War Syndrome and ideological difference between the US and some Asian countries, children with the ancestral origin labels could easily fall victim to campus bully and even hate crime. They should not be subject to burdens from such falsely accused claims.

Third, to label a person according to their ancestral origin, serves as dubious causality of behavioral differences, which most time is false association. Scholastic performance differences, for example, could be better explained by social economic status, rather than individual’s ethnic or ancestral origins. It will make more sense to collect household income data to support underprivileged kids. Using distribution data of specific ethnic groups to predict individual behavior difference is a typical "ecological fallacy" – “in the interpretation of statistical data where inferences about the nature of individuals are deduced from inference for the group to which those individuals belong” (source: Wikipedia.com). Therefore, collecting ethnic or ancestral origin data will NOT help improve the academic performance of kids from specific ethnic groups. Similarly, some healthcare needs in the specific first-generation ethnic group of immigrants could be better explained by behavior issues, rather than “races,” another commonly misused concept which leads to dubious causality in the interpretation.

In conclusion, Asian registry policy has no benefit but leads to tremendous damage to American people. Ethnic or ancestral origin data collection must be banned, not just for Asian people, but for all American of any ethnic groups.

Sincerely,

Jun Lin

Jun Lin, Ph.D.
Professor of Management, SUNY at New Paltz
Chair, Board of Directors, Founding Principal, Huaxia Chinese School of Greater New York