Supporting S.B. 359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”

3/8/2018

Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Xinyi Lu. I am a resident of Woodbridge, CT and am working at the University of New Haven as a tenured associate professor and the Assistant Dean of the College of Business. I am also a board member of the Chinese American Professors Association in Connecticut (CAPA-CT). I am writing to support bill S.B. 359 “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 mandatory collection and separation of data from students by subpopulations of national origin or ethnicity”. However, I am very concerned in regard of this portion of the current bill language “unless … collected uniformly across the entire population of students”. I believe the entire population shall not be subject to registry of ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin.

As a mom of a 9-year old boy, I am supporting the original concept because I feel it is unfair for my son to be profiled as another kind of American and to be treated differently at school because of his mom’s national origin. My son who was born and raised in the United States, like every child of America, is an American. Asking kids to identify their ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin will make them feel they are different and impose psychological harms on them. So I believe that kids should not be required to provide such information when they fill out forms at school.

As an educator who has taught more than 1,000 college students over the last for 8 years, I don’t think the registry of students’ ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin would lead to better allocation of our education resources. We cannot presume that a particular ethnic group would struggle more in school and need more help than others. We need to look at students’ report card and/or other measures of students’ academic performance and see who is in need of assistance and supports. The allocation of education resources should be need-based rather than race-based. Therefore, I think registry of students’ ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin is unnecessary.

As a researcher myself, I understand that certain researcher may need disaggregated student data. However, I believe that such data should be voluntarily provided by the participants of a research project and the confidentiality of the participants should be protected. State agencies should not mandatorily require students to provide information in name of research.

As an immigrant who has been studying and working in the United States for about 15 years, I am supporting the original concept because I believe that the United States—a country of immigrants is a land of equal opportunity for all regardless of one’s ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin.
Please modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin”. Please vote for bill SB359.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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