Honorable members of the Education Committee:

My name is Tracy Lu, and I am a 10th grade student at Amity High School, Woodbridge, Connecticut. I am writing to testify in regard of bill No. SB359 “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”.

Data disaggregation will lead to the distribution of resources in an ethnicity-based rather than need-based manner. Ideally, help should always be given to those that need it. A poor man should be aided with money. A starving man should be given food. Similarly, a struggling student with low test scores should be given additional help to allow them to succeed.

Of course, the current system for helping these students is not perfect, but disaggregating student data based on ethnicity will not be a solution to this paramount issue. Instead, it sets a precedent that one’s academic success is based on their ethnicity- a statement that blatantly contradicts American ideals.

Educational aid should be allocated based on which students are most in need of it. This can be achieved by looking at students’ grades, standardized test scores, and other indicators of academic performance. A student’s scores in these areas will likely show if they have any remedial needs, which can then be provided for them.

Ethnicity, however, is neither a direct nor valid indication of a student’s academic performance. Yes, ethnicity can be a huge factor in an individual’s life, but ethnicity alone says nothing about how a certain person performs in school. It is also wrong to state that all students of a certain ethnicity must be struggling; this undermines individual merits and instead judges people based on an image created by a group they happen to belong to.

It is completely absurd to draw lines based on ethnicity when a student’s grades are very likely to provide information on whether additional help is needed. This also goes for race, gender, or any other subgroup to categorize people. In America, help should be given to those in need. Dividing people based on where they came from will not help accomplish this, and only enforces decisions. An individual’s voice will be painfully stifled if it is overwhelmed by the shouts of stereotypes and labels.
Please modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subjected to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin”. Please vote for bill SB359.

Sincerely,
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