March 7, 2018

Honorable Members of Educational Committee:

My name is Qing Liu, Ph. D. I am a registered voter from Woodbridge, CT. 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". I 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 because of the following five reasons.

1. All American citizens are 100% American regardless of race. The United States is a country that has welcomed immigrants during its entire history. At some point of each of our family ancestry, majority of the United States citizens can relate to the fact that their forefathers came to this country with a dream. I am a first-generation immigrant. I am proud to be an American. I swore the naturalization oath to be a faithful citizen almost ten years ago:

"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."

I believe when each one of us who has swore this oath has tied his/her entire interest and well-being to the United States. We are "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all". My four children are taught to recite pledge of allegiance at school. My children's friends are of all races, Asian, white, black, and some from South Asia. In our children's eyes, they are not discriminated by their colors or races. In the awakening of the Asian Disaggregation proposal, I asked my children if they are different from their friends, they looked at me with confusion and answered: "No. Why?" Our education system and our dedicated teachers have done a great job educating our next generation to believe that all are created equally. Please do not separate them based on their ethnic groups and tell them that there is another standard that they need to abide with when they grow up.

2. First-generation of immigrants face hardship is a fact for almost all races. As a first-generation of immigrants from China, I can testify that my life of the first 5 years in this country was hard. Even
though I was a graduate student and was given stipend for my research and teaching, the money could only support me to live in the poorest and the most dangerous neighborhood around University of Pittsburgh. The first apartment I rented with another fellow Chinese student was infested with cockroaches and fly larva. Even though we were poor, there was a saying that we needed to keep at least a $5 bill in our wallet just in case if we were robbed. If we were robbed, we could have some money to give to the robbers in order to spare our lives. I thank God for His protection that I never personally experienced a robbery. Some of my fellow graduate students who lived in the neighborhood was not so fortunate. I had a dream back then. I wanted to build a better life for my future generations. I worked hard, 16 hours a day in the lab, sometimes 20 hours a day. Hard work paid off. I was able to graduate with honor and went on to pursue post-doctoral and professional work. I understand that many first-generation immigrants face extreme challenges. That is why we work extra hard to contribute to the society so we can build a better life for our next generation. I am willing to contribute help for first-generation immigrants, money and/or time. However, I do not believe that Asian disaggregation is the answer to the struggles of the first-generation immigration.

3. America is a melting pot. It has been proven that America is a place that cultures and races merge. This is what is unique about America. Bill No. SB359 makes perfect sense because disaggregation of student based on ethnic or race subgroups will become extremely difficult to execute from a practical point of view. Intermarriages among the immigrants are extremely common. According to a report by Gretchen Livingston and Anna Brown, 29% of the Asian newlyweds are intermarried in 2015. It is impossible to capture the race of a child after a few generations. If a student is forced to put down a race, the family will arbitrarily choose a race that will be more beneficial to the child. Therefore, the so-called Asian Disaggregation for health and education purpose will only be cluttered by arbitrary entries based on maximum benefit one can obtain. It will largely be misrepresenting.

4. Connecticut already has regulations designed to benefit those who needs help. My first hand experience came from the Birth to Three system. Three out of four of my children went through birth23. This service is not necessarily free. The current guideline for payment is families that make $45,000 or more pay a monthly fee based on a sliding scale. This is a perfect system to help the poor and let the more financially fortunate family contribute to the system. Each school year, when health forms come home, there has always been a box for optional Husky health insurance for student without health insurance. In addition, the state has a Medicaid system for families who struggles financially. Connecticut has been doing a lot to support family with financial needs. These needs are better characterized by a family's income level rather than a child's race.

5. Bill No. SB359 is budget-friendly for Connecticut. As stated above, due to the fact that race disaggregation loses its meaning beyond second generation immigrants and CT's financially based assistant systems for both education and healthcare, prohibiting the disaggregation of races and ethnics can stop the implementation of a meaningless effort of our already budget-tight state.
Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I hope I have convinced you that no population of students shall be subjected to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin. This type of data collection is foremost against the teaching of what our children received from school and the spirit of America. In addition, this type of data cannot meaningfully represent the needs of under-represented minorities of the country but create future division among American people.

I have four children. Let me conclude my testimony by a quote from Dr. King's famous speech. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Sincerely,

Qing Liu, Ph. D.

A Woodbridge resident