Honorable Members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Christine Tong and I have been a Connecticut resident for all my life. I currently attend high school at Joel Barlow in Redding Connecticut.

First of all, I’d like to applaud the committee for proposing a bill on “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System (No. SB359)” and holding a public hearing to allow everyone to express their opinion.

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 with a specific language used in the bill, which states, “unless ... collected uniformly across the entire population of students.” I believe no one shall be subject to register the national origin of his or her ancestry.

This is the United States of America, where “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” is encouraged. Where we value “equal protection of the laws.” And those very laws provide us with equal opportunity. Where we stand united, not in division. When more divisions are created, more prejudices are justified. When people have another way, another metric, to segregate and to discriminate it harms everyone.

This is not just a fight for Asians to be equally treated by the law. This is a fight for my generation and future generations to be intolerant to injustice and separation. In a polarized society today, we need every little ounce of help we can get to bring everyone together. Just like separation can never be equal, disaggregation cannot achieve fairness. It only creates more social disparities.

I am not defined by my race. I am defined by my words, my actions, and my compassion. Race is not just a box to group and segregate people. It is a weapon on our very beliefs as citizens of the United States. We need to value each other because of the very fact that we are all humans. All Americans. All citizens of the world.

Once again, 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.”

I stand in firm support of a single future box: Human.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Christine Tong