Testimony before the Education Committee
Opposing S.B. 359 Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic Subgroups
Testimony by Ban Tran
Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations
Thursday, March 8, 2018

Good morning, Members of the Education Committee. My name is Ban Tran. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations. Our agency provides immigrant and refugee services, to Vietnamese and other immigrants and refugees who have lived in the United States for 1 to 5 years. We also provide in-home referral services to help our clients find and apply for needed health, employment and social service programs. Our agency is devoted to helping recent refugees from other countries.

I would like to oppose Senate Bill 359. Many of our clients have children in the public schools who suffer from educational challenges. Many come to school with gaps in their education and limited English skills. Some of our most recent refugees have some of the lowest test scores, but without data on these smaller subgroups, schools are unable to identify problems that may be unique to them. When data is collected into one large group of “Asians,” for example, the problems of smaller groups remain unseen. This is true for other subgroups as well, such as Hispanics or African Americans.

When the public schools don’t know about the problems that refugee and recent immigrant children experience, there is no motivation to solve those problems. Policies will not be developed to address the educational issues of refugee children. We need to collect more refined data on all subgroups---in the Asian communities, but also in other small subgroups as well. Having less data would represent a hardship for these recent refugee and immigrant communities.

We need more data, not less data, on small subgroups. The future educational outcomes of the children of recent immigrants and refugees is at stake. For these reasons, I oppose Senate Bill 359.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ban Tran
Executive Director, Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations
2074 Park Street, Suite 103
Hartford, Ct. 06106