March 5, 2018

Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Zhenyu Yang. I am a Chinese Asian American. I have been a resident of town of Old Saybrook for more than 20 years. I am writing to testify in regard of Bill SB359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”.

When I arrived at this country in 1989, I was under the impression that everybody is equal. And this country ensures equal opportunity for everybody regardless of race. I have been telling my children that as long as they work hard academically they will get good education and employment opportunities.

Unfortunately I found the recent reality can no longer be described as “equal opportunity for everybody regardless of race”. I am seeing more and more race based education program. I am searching for summer programs for my daughter at this moment. But often I see a good program but I know my daughter is not allowed to apply for it, because the program is for “under-represented” races only. (See appendix for some examples) My children are qualified for these programs academically, but my children have been excluded from these education programs solely because Asian American has been regarded as “over-represented”.

I believe each individual student is equal and independent from each other. How can my daughter be turned down on education opportunity just because there are a few other Asian Americans already in similar program? My daughter does not even know them and it is irrelevant. I believe the only standard to admit a student is academics. Race should never be a factor in admission evaluation.

I believe that in United Stated everybody is equal and hard working should be rewarded. Hard working should not be the reason to be punished and discriminated. Nobody should be regarded as from “over-represented” race. Each student is an equal individual and only represents himself/herself. The concept of “over-represented” is racist and does not belong to this country.

The so-called Asian Subdivision or Asian Registry is an attempt to collect statistical data to support the notion of “over-represented” of Asian American. With these data, some people will be able to pin-point specific races, like Chinese American and Indian American, to be over-represented. It is a tool of racial profile and discrimination.

I am proud that state of Connecticut has raised Bill SB359, which will prohibit the collection of Asian Subdivision data. By prohibiting Asian Subdivision data, it will ensure every student will have equal opportunity regardless of race.
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 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.

Please vote for Bill SB359.

Sincerely yours,
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Appendix:

Screen shots of some college summer web pages that claim they only look for “under-represented” students.

The Summer Opportunities for Access & Inclusion Programs invite students with strong academic records, who are U.S. citizens/permanent residents, to apply.

Students with the following backgrounds are invited to apply:

- Underrepresented minorities
- Families of low socioeconomic status, which may be indicated by eligibility for public assistance programs or free/reduced lunch programs
- Potentially first in family to attend college
- Attendance at rural or inner-city high schools with historically low rates of admittance to top-tier colleges

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Opportunities for Students from Backgrounds Under-Represented in the Health Professions

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