Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Joshua Zhang. 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, we are 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 as a student myself, I feel that the regarded portion of the bill would provide an unfair advantage and disadvantage to myself and my fellow students. Imagine if you were applying to a college and you had to specify your own race and nation of origin. Or if you were applying to a job and had to do the same thing. There are already a lot of problems that are coming to light with colleges and employers rejecting people of certain races in order to have “diversity”, and suddenly forcing people to openly give every bit of information about their race and racial history would just make it easier for colleges and businesses to have more “diversity”. Not only that, but this process would degrade students’ worth as well. By making it obligatory to report your race to your school or employer, you make race seem like a really important part that they need to look at. I mean, why else would they make you do that? This portion of the bill essentially states that race is a defining part of you that must be taken into consideration in regard to education and job opportunities. But isn’t that exactly what we’ve been saying is not the case for the past couple of decades? I just do not believe that this portion of the bill can benefit anybody, which is why I believe that the bill should stick its original concept.

Please modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin”. Please vote for bill SB359.

Joshua Zhang - 203.521.1712, jz1000462@students.westportps.org