Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Danian Zheng. I am an Engineer with General Electric Company and live in Fairfield, 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 Bill’s idea 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 do have my concerns in regard of the specific clause in the bill language “unless ... collected uniformly across the entire population of students”. I believe nobody shall be registered by ancestry, national or ethnicity origin at all.

I am supporting this bill because my personal experience taught me that it is critical to eliminate any racial or origin based discrimination so that common people could achieve their dreams and grow into what they aspired to be.

I grow up in the capital city of China and went to the best university there. I was surprised to find that as the top students of the nation, we are not equal since the beginning. China has a quota system on how many students the university could admit from each province and city based on their size and “developmental status”. It is strongly biased toward major cities. So the same smart kid from rural area would have to work 10 times harder to get in compared to students growing up in major cities. Then when these rural kids worked their way through to the graduation, their job opportunity is limited to going back to the poor provinces they came from to “develop the home town”. It is extremely unfair and none of the kids got sent back really stayed working there for long anyway.

This sense of missing the equality of opportunities drove many of us to United States to study Technology in Graduate schools and eventually became productive US citizens and pillars of the local community. Today I look back, I am very thankful to the University of Illinois for accepting me into their prestige Doctorate program without asking where I am from. The only criterion is I was qualified for the opportunity. Now I would like to safeguard the same merit-based equal opportunity system in the public services domain for everybody - my children and all the other children, disregard of their color, origin and other differences.

I would like to request our Senators to represent me and all the people like me to vote for bill SB359. Also please change the language mentioned earlier to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin” before you vote.

Sincerely yours

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