Dear Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Rose Zhou. I am a 7th grade student of East Lyme Middle School in East Lyme, 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 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”, because everyone in the United States (except Native Americans) is from different countries all over the world. When I was in 1st grade, I made a “friend.” She said she was my best friend and I thought so. Then, in the middle of the year everything changed. I asked to play with Paige (my “friend”) during recess. Paige said to me, “I can’t play with a Chinese.” I went home and told my mom about it. The next day in the hallway, Paige said to me, “My mom said I can’t make friends with Chinese people.” I also told my mom about this. That night, my brother emailed my teacher, and my teacher passed this situation on to the principal. After the principal had a talk with Paige she didn’t do anything of discrimination, but told other kids not to play with me. One day at recess, a friend of mine came over and said, “Rose, it’s me, Marisa.” It looked like she had something really important to say to me. But then Paige came up behind her and called her away. Another day at recess, I asked to play with that girl named Marisa. She said, “Hold on, I have to ask Paige.” Then she ran away. I knew
that I shouldn’t wait for her to come back. So, I started running around the playground by myself. This continued until the end of 1st grade. The first day of 2nd grade I made a new friend, a true best friend. But Paige lured her away at some point of the year. When I was playing with her, I told her about what had happened with me and Paige in 1st grade, so she kind of stopped playing with Paige. Thankfully, Paige moved away in 3rd grade. I forced myself to forget all that had happened between us. Every time I think about this, I cry. It has been a long time before I thought of what had happened. Since I forced myself to forget, it was painful to hear my past again. We are all citizens of the US. We all have rights to be like every other US citizen and do what they can do. We are the United States of America, not the Divided States of America. I hope my story will make a contribution to the decision. It was painful to remember.

However, I am 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.

Race and ethnicity should never be criteria to categorize people.

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.

Sincerely,

Rose Zhou