Regarding: Testimony in support of the CT bill No. SB359

Honorable Members of Education Committee:

This is Wenliang Zhou, a resident of Farmington CT, and an Associate Research Scientist at Yale University. I am writing to support the bill No. SB359, “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”.

To clarify, 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”. While, I am not in favor of this portion in 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 and my wife are currently permanent residents of the US and have been living in Connecticut for over 13 years. We have two lovely kids, both been born here and attending our local public schools. It is so naturally that we are now considering the US as our home country. Below I give two instances why I support the bill No. SB359 and the original concept of prohibition of racial disaggregation.

My son is the only Asian in his class in Reggio Magnet School. While other kids filled their data sheets and identified themselves as white or black, my son was reminded to check before “Asian”. He was confused and asked me, why I told him that he is an American, while the teacher still thought he belonged to Asia? Isn’t it supposed all kids are equal?

Despite the confusion caused by current data segregation, I cannot imagine how should I answer my kids if someday they bring me a form and ask me why they should call themselves “Chinese” instead of “American”. Recall that recently the FBI director Wray claimed that Chinese is “a whole-of-society threat”. When my kids choose their race as “Chinese”, isn’t it a potential threat to them as well?

Connecticut is where the Constitution of the United States of America came into being. I believe the CT people know better why and how it is so important to defend the spirit of the Constitution. Here I urge you, 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.

Thanks!

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