

Senator Marc R. Pacheco
Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
Massachusetts State House – Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Antonio Cabral
Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
Massachusetts State House – Room 466
Boston, MA 02133

September 28, 2021

Dear Senator Pacheco and Representative Cabral,

We are writing to urge you to support H.3115, An Act Ensuring Equitable Representation in the Commonwealth, filed by Representative Tackey Chan. We are a group of organizations and institutions who want to see a more equitable collection of data and treatment for Massachusetts' diverse residents. With increasing diversity in the Commonwealth, it is important to accurately document, measure and report data that informs public efforts to address social, economic, or educational inequalities which persist but may be invisible in data analyzed only through broad racial categories.

Data equity is a civil rights issue because without detailed demographic data locally, we are unable to serve the health needs of critically under-represented and under-served communities. Currently, when data is collected, they are combined to produce statistics as a single summary of an entire racial group. However, all ethnic subgroups have different histories, backgrounds, needs, and challenges. Without accurate data broken down by detailed sub-ethnic groups, critical needs of some communities in the areas, such as language, economic status, education, health, could be left unmet.

Equitable representation in population data ensures that everybody is seen, heard, counted, and accommodated. We need to ensure that our state agencies, which already collect optional demographic data based on race, also provide ethnic subgroup breakdowns to ensure full visibility, representation, and inclusion for underserved and underrepresented groups.

H.3115 suggests that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts standardize state forms to collect optional race and ethnicity data to more closely resemble the way the federal Census breaks down demographic data. This allows for more comprehensive research, analysis, and provision of services to all of our Commonwealth's diverse communities.

Every government agency that currently collects voluntary demographic data based on race or ethnicity of residents should further add voluntary subgroup options for Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, Black and African American, and White. This would highlight and uplift data representing communities in our Commonwealth including but not limited to Vietnamese, Cambodian, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Haitian, Cape Verdean, Ethiopian, Somalian, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Dominicans, and Colombians. We must also recognize the diversity within Native American, Middle Eastern, and North African communities in our Commonwealth, which currently have limited recognition by the Census Bureau.

We urge you to support data equity by moving H.3115 favorably through the legislative process for an affirmative vote by the Legislature.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

1. Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts
2. Action for Equity
3. African Community Economic Development of New England
4. Anti-Defamation League
5. Asian Pacific Islanders Civic Action Network (APIsCAN)
6. Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
7. Asian American Resource Workshop
8. Asian American Women's Political Initiative
9. Asian Community Development Corporation
10. Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence
11. All Dorchester Sports and Leadership
12. ACLU of Massachusetts
13. Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
14. Boston Education Justice Alliance
15. Boston University Chinese Student Association
16. Brazilian Immigrant Center
17. Brazilian Women's Group
18. Brookline Asian American Family Network
19. Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
20. Castle Square Tenant Organization
21. Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores
22. Channing and Popai Liem Education Foundation
23. Chinatown Community Land Trust
24. Chinatown Residents Association
25. Chinese Progressive Association
26. Coalition for Social Justice
27. Codman Square NDC
28. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission
29. Community Action Agency of Somerville
30. Community Labor United
31. DotHouse Health
32. Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)
33. Friends of the Chinatown Library
34. GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)
35. Greater Boston Labor Council
36. Greater Boston Legal Services Asian Outreach Unit
37. Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition
38. Harvard Law School Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)
39. Health Imperatives
40. Health Law Advocates
41. Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health
42. Indivisible Acton Area
43. Indivisible Pittsfield

44. Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
45. Institute for Asian American Studies in UMass Boston
46. Jane Doe Inc. (JDI)
47. Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center
48. Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Justice
49. Justice at Work
50. La Colaborativa
51. Latino Education Institute
52. Lawyers for Civil Rights
53. Lynn United for Change
54. Malden Neighbors Helping Neighbors
55. Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association (MAAEA)
56. Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys
57. Massachusetts Coalition of Domestic Workers
58. Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
59. Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA)
60. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
61. Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
62. Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
63. Massachusetts Public Health Association
64. Massachusetts Voter Table
65. Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
66. Mijente Members in Boston
67. Neighbors United for Better East Boston
68. New England United for Justice
69. Northeastern University Korean American Student Association
70. Northeastern University School of Law's Asian Pacific American Law Student Association
71. Progressive Mass
72. Quincy Asian Resources Inc.
73. Revere Youth in Action (RYIA)
74. Roxbury Stone House, Inc
75. Saheli Support and Friendship for South Asian Women and Families
76. Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
77. South Cove Community Health Center
78. Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
79. Southeast Asian American Education (SEAE) Coalition
80. Suffolk University Law School's Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (APALSA)
81. Tech Goes Home
82. The Center for Hope and Healing
83. The Dow Fund
84. The Neighborhood Developers
85. True Alliance Center Inc.
86. United Interfaith Action of Southeastern MA (UIA)
87. Urban Edge
88. VietAID
89. Women Encouraging Empowerment
90. Worcester Interfaith