

CROWN ACT (HB 178)

Favor TP's

1pm Session convened by Civil Justice Committee

Bills for consideration in Committee (in order)

- 1. SB 16 (Immunity from liability for donations of perishable food)**
 - 2. HB 178 (CROWN Act)**
 - 3. HB 179 (Liability in tort actions)**
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Good Afternoon, Chair Hillyer and members of the civil justice committee. My name is Shayla Favor and I have the honor of serving as Columbus City Councilmember. I am also a proud resident of Columbus AND a proud black woman. I am here today to strongly support the passage of HB 178, also known as the CROWN Act.

For too long, Black girls have been discriminated against and criminalized for the hair that grows on our heads and the way we move through and show up in this world. As an acronym for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural hair, the act seeks to address the discrimination that many feel for their hairstyles that are often associated with Black culture. This includes braids, twists, locs, or afros.

Natural hairstyles are often viewed as less professional and cause school and workplace discrimination. In fact, Black women are 50% more likely to be sent home from work or school because of their natural hair and 80% more likely to change their natural hair to meet societal norms or expectations at work. Because current societal understandings of professionalism often do not include natural hair, black women are often pressured to change their natural hairstyles, often at great financial expense.

In 2023, Black women's hair made them 2.5 times more likely to be seen as unprofessional and Black women with coily/textured hair being 2x as likely to experience microaggression in the workspace than Black women with straighter hair.

In 2021 it was documented that 100% of Black elementary school girls in majority-white schools (who report experiencing hair discrimination) experienced discrimination by the age of 10; with 53% of Black mothers say their daughters have experienced racial discrimination based on hairstyles as early as five years old.

These Black women are students; young professional; and grown women expressing their beauty and history in their hair, yet they are facing discrimination. Black women should not continue to lose the chance for educational and workspace opportunities, or be ostracized for wearing their hair in its natural state.

Natural hair is inherent to racial identity, that is why on December 17th 2020, I co-sponsored the passage of City Ordinance 2880-2020, which modified the Columbus City Codes to clarify that discrimination on the basis of hair texture or protective or cultural hairstyles is discrimination on the basis of race. During the passage of the CROWN ACT legislation, I said, “Through the implementation of the CROWN Act, we are preparing to make strides towards greater equity in professional and educational environments for our Black community members who have been penalized for the appearance and style of their natural hair.” And these words ring true today.

Yet no protection exists against race-based hair discrimination at the State level. Passage of the CROWN Act would ensure that women of color can embrace their natural hairstyle throughout the great state of Ohio without fear of exclusion or ramifications at the office, in the classroom, and in all places where they live, work, and play.

Twenty states, including but not limited to Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington have already

enacted their versions of the CROWN Act; and within the state of Ohio, Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, have enacted the CROWN ACT.

I strongly urge and request your support in the State of Ohio joining these growing number of states and support HB 178. We are proud to support this legislation and hope you will join us in seeking to create a world in which natural hair is embraced and individuals of color can thrive without fear of discrimination.