



**School Board President Mary E. Rice  
East Cleveland School District**

**Testimony – House Bill 178**

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and the members of the Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 178 known as the “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (C.R.O.W.N.) Act”.

My name is Dr. Rice and I serve as the president of East Cleveland School board. House Bill 178 would complement the self-love and pride that our school district culture tries to provide for every student in the district.

I will start with the facts first. According to Dove, 66% of Black girls in majority-white schools report experiencing hair discrimination, compared to 45% of Black girls in all school environments. A 2020 study found that 70% of school dress codes mention hair, with 20% forbidding students to wear their hair in Afros and 20% forbidding students to wear their hair in braids.

The C.R.O.W.N. Act is another tool our school board has to end hair discrimination bias that disproportionately effect girls of color in schools.

The C.R.O.W.N. Act encourages student to stay in Ohio for colleges. Ohio has invested Into multiple scholarships such as: ‘Choose Ohio First Scholarship and ‘Forever Buckeye Grant’. But with 24 state and counting that have passed the CROWN Act it gives our student a reason to leave Ohio.

The C.R.O.W.N Act will help school board members to come up with a more inclusive student code. The C.R.O.W.N. Act is an expression of self-love in a world that constantly wants our kids to fit in to unreachable beauty standards.

I respectfully ask for this Committee to vote YES, for House Bill 178.

Thank you.