

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s texture or style of hair.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s texture or style of hair.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Creating a Respectful
5 and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2024” or the
6 “CROWN Act of 2024”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSE.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Throughout United States history, society
10 has used (in conjunction with skin color) hair tex-

1 ture and hairstyle to classify individuals on the basis
2 of race.

3 (2) Like one’s skin color, one’s hair has served
4 as a basis of race and national origin discrimination.

5 (3) Racial and national origin discrimination
6 can and do occur because of longstanding racial and
7 national origin biases and stereotypes associated
8 with hair texture and style.

9 (4) For example, people of African descent have
10 been deprived of educational and employment oppor-
11 tunities because they are adorned with natural or
12 protective hairstyles in which hair is tightly coiled or
13 tightly curled, or worn in locs, cornrows, twists,
14 braids, Bantu knots, or Afros.

15 (5) Racial and national origin discrimination is
16 reflected in school and workplace policies and prac-
17 tices that bar natural or protective hairstyles com-
18 monly worn by people of African descent.

19 (6) For example, as recently as 2018, the
20 United States Armed Forces had grooming policies
21 that barred natural or protective hairstyles that
22 servicewomen of African descent commonly wear and
23 that described these hairstyles as “unkempt”.

1 (7) In 2018, the United States Armed Forces
2 rescinded these policies and recognized that this de-
3 scription perpetuated derogatory racial stereotypes.

4 (8) The United States Armed Forces also rec-
5 ognized that prohibitions against natural or protec-
6 tive hairstyles that African-American servicewomen
7 are commonly adorned with are racially discrimina-
8 tory and bear no relationship to African-American
9 servicewomen's occupational qualifications and their
10 ability to serve and protect the Nation.

11 (9) Some Federal courts have narrowly inter-
12 preted the protections against discrimination on the
13 basis of race or national origin found in existing
14 Federal civil rights laws, including provisions of the
15 Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.),
16 section 1977 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C.
17 1981), and the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601
18 et seq.), thereby permitting, for example, employers
19 to discriminate against people of African descent
20 who wear natural or protective hairstyles, even
21 though the employment policies involved are not re-
22 lated to workers' ability to perform their jobs.

23 (10) Applying these narrow interpretations has
24 resulted in a lack of Federal civil rights protection
25 for individuals who are discriminated against on the

1 basis of characteristics that are commonly associated
2 with race and national origin.

3 (11) Starting in 2019, State legislatures and
4 municipal bodies throughout the United States have
5 introduced and passed legislation that rejects certain
6 Federal courts' restrictive interpretation of race and
7 national origin, and expressly classifies race and na-
8 tional origin discrimination as inclusive of discrimi-
9 nation on the basis of natural or protective hair-
10 styles commonly associated with race and national
11 origin.

12 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
13 gress that—

14 (1) the Federal Government should acknowl-
15 edge that individuals who have hair texture or wear
16 a hairstyle that is historically and contemporarily as-
17 sociated with African Americans or persons of Afri-
18 can descent have suffered harmful discrimination in
19 schools, workplaces, and other contexts based upon
20 longstanding race and national origin stereotypes
21 and biases;

22 (2) a clear and comprehensive law should ad-
23 dress the deprivation of educational, employment,
24 and other opportunities on the basis of hair texture

1 and hairstyle that are commonly associated with
2 race or national origin;

3 (3) clear, consistent, and enforceable legal
4 standards must be provided to redress the wide-
5 spread incidences of race and national origin dis-
6 crimination based upon hair texture and hairstyle in
7 schools, workplaces, housing, federally funded insti-
8 tutions, and other contexts;

9 (4) it is necessary to prevent educational, em-
10 ployment, and other decisions, practices, and policies
11 generated by or reflecting negative biases and
12 stereotypes related to race or national origin;

13 (5) the Federal Government must play a key
14 role in enforcing Federal civil rights laws in a way
15 that secures equal educational, employment, and
16 other opportunities for all individuals regardless of
17 their race or national origin;

18 (6) the Federal Government must play a central
19 role in enforcing the standards established under
20 this Act on behalf of individuals who suffer race or
21 national origin discrimination based upon hair tex-
22 ture and hairstyle;

23 (7) it is necessary to prohibit and provide rem-
24 edies for the harms suffered as a result of race or

1 national origin discrimination on the basis of hair
2 texture and hairstyle; and

3 (8) it is necessary to mandate that school,
4 workplace, and other applicable standards be applied
5 in a nondiscriminatory manner and to explicitly pro-
6 hibit the adoption or implementation of grooming re-
7 quirements that disproportionately impact people of
8 African descent.

9 (c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to institute
10 definitions of race and national origin for Federal civil
11 rights laws that effectuate the comprehensive scope of pro-
12 tection Congress intended to be afforded by such laws and
13 Congress' objective to eliminate race and national origin
14 discrimination in the United States.

15 **SEC. 3. FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—No individual in the United
17 States shall be excluded from participation in, be denied
18 the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under,
19 any program or activity receiving Federal financial assist-
20 ance, based on the individual's hair texture or hairstyle,
21 if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associ-
22 ated with a particular race or national origin (including
23 a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled,
24 locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

1 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-
2 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-
3 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was
4 incorporated in title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
5 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), and as if a violation of sub-
6 section (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section
7 601 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d).

8 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

9 (1) the term “program or activity” has the
10 meaning given the term in section 606 of the Civil
11 Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–4a); and

12 (2) the terms “race” and “national origin”
13 mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the
14 term in section 601 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d)
15 and “national origin” within the meaning of the
16 term in that section 601.

17 **SEC. 4. HOUSING PROGRAMS.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States
19 shall be subjected to a discriminatory housing practice
20 based on the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair
21 texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a
22 particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in
23 which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, corn-
24 rows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

1 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-
2 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-
3 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was
4 incorporated in the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601
5 et seq.), and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated
6 as if it was a discriminatory housing practice.

7 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section—

8 (1) the terms “discriminatory housing practice”
9 and “person” have the meanings given the terms in
10 section 802 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C.
11 3602); and

12 (2) the terms “race” and “national origin”
13 mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the
14 term in section 804 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 3604)
15 and “national origin” within the meaning of the
16 term in that section 804.

17 **SEC. 5. PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States
19 shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section
20 201, 202, or 203 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42
21 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), based on the person’s hair texture
22 or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is com-
23 monly associated with a particular race or national origin
24 (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or

1 tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots,
2 and Afros).

3 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-
4 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-
5 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was
6 incorporated in title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,
7 and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if
8 it was a violation of section 201, 202, or 203, as appro-
9 priate, of such Act.

10 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the terms “race”
11 and “national origin” mean, respectively, “race” within
12 the meaning of the term in section 201 of that Act (42
13 U.S.C. 2000a) and “national origin” within the meaning
14 of the term in that section 201.

15 **SEC. 6. EMPLOYMENT.**

16 (a) PROHIBITION.—It shall be an unlawful employ-
17 ment practice for an employer, employment agency, labor
18 organization, or joint labor-management committee con-
19 trolling apprenticeship or other training or retraining (in-
20 cluding on-the-job training programs) to fail or refuse to
21 hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to dis-
22 criminate against an individual, based on the individual’s
23 hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hair-
24 style is commonly associated with a particular race or na-
25 tional origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly

1 coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids,
2 Bantu knots, and Afros).

3 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-
4 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-
5 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was
6 incorporated in title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
7 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.), and as if a violation of sub-
8 section (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section
9 703 or 704, as appropriate, of such Act (42 U.S.C.
10 2000e–2, 2000e–3).

11 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the terms “per-
12 son”, “race”, and “national origin” have the meanings
13 given the terms in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of
14 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e).

15 **SEC. 7. EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States
17 shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section
18 1977 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981), based on
19 the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture
20 or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular
21 race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair
22 is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists,
23 braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

24 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-
25 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-

1 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was
2 incorporated in section 1977 of the Revised Statutes, and
3 as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was
4 a violation of that section 1977.

5 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

6 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit defini-
7 tions of race or national origin under the Civil Rights Act
8 of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), the Fair Housing Act
9 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), or section 1977 of the Revised
10 Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981).