

H.363

AN ACT RELATING TO PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON CERTAIN HAIR TYPES AND STYLES

INTENT:

To **expand Vermont's anti-discrimination statutes in the Public Accommodations Act** to include the prohibition of discrimination based on certain **hair types, textures and protective styles** in places of public accommodation including schools and workplaces.



BASIS:

Vermont's version of the CROWN Act (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair)

- **prohibits race-based hair discrimination:** the denial of employment and educational opportunities because of hair texture or protective hairstyles
 - including braids, locs, twists or Bantu knots

Enacted in 23 states, including our neighbors NY and ME.

IMPACT:

The freedom to take pride in one's appearance in a manner that feels in alignment with the traits associated with their race and culture, improves confidence, self-esteem, dignity and respect.

If passed, people who choose to wear their "natural" hair will have the same protections from discrimination, harassment, and bullying as other protected classes.

This could result in improved access and opportunities in work, school, and life without having to erase or minimize one's identity or culture.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

According to a 2023 CROWN Workplace Research Study...

- 66% of black girls in predominantly white school (PWS) report experiencing hair discrimination.
- 100% of black girls in PWS who report hair discrimination state that the experience occurred by the age of 10.
- 47% of black mothers have reported experiencing hair discrimination.

A research study surveying 2,990 women (in the U.S., Dec.2022 & Jan.2023) reported...

- Black women's hair was 2.5x more likely to be perceived as unprofessional.
- over 1/2 of black women felt like they had to wear their hair straight in a job interview & 2/3 reported changing their hair for a job interview.
- 1/4 of the black women surveyed believed they were denied a job because of their hair.



THE HISTORY

Hair is a **symbol of pride and identity** for many.

The intricacies of culture and nuance of hair dates back to the transatlantic slave trade where seeds were braided into the hair for survival, braids were used as guides to escape enslavement. In other cases, it was used as symbol of status, age, wealth, or tribe.

MOVING FORWARD

However, this bill is less about the glamorization and pride of people's hair/styles but instead addressing the discrimination and harassment that may ensue.

The Senate has already seen versions of similar legislation previously. As H.363 has passed the House, we hope the Senate will understand this is an important issue to Vermonters, and will help Vermont become the 24th state to acknowledge and protect people from race-based hair discrimination.

