



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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CONTACT: Amanda Kraus, 503-986-1074

Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov

Oregon Senate Passes the CROWN Act

SALEM – Today, the Oregon Senate passed the Create a Respectful and Open World Act, also known as the CROWN Act. House Bill 2935 prohibits race-based hair discrimination, including the denial of education or employment opportunities due to hair texture or style.

“It is an act of self-love for the Black community to be able to show up at work and school in public places as ourselves,” said Representative Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), one of the bill’s chief sponsors. “This bill is part of a larger conversation we are having about who created the rules, and who benefits from those rules. It’s time for people to be able to express themselves unapologetically. This bill will remove barriers to that, particularly for our young people, who should feel safe and welcomed in school sports and activities.”

First enacted in California in 2019, policies like the CROWN Act have been adopted by other states and municipalities and are currently under consideration in other jurisdictions. Oregon currently prohibits school and workplace discrimination based on race, but the applicable definitions do not explicitly include hair type, texture or style. The passage of House Bill 2935 will ensure that the definition of discrimination includes hair type, texture or style.

“This is a matter of fairness,” said Senator Lew Frederick (D-N/NE Portland). “Discrimination based on hair style is rooted in racism. To equate a protective hairstyle or wearing a natural hair style as an indicator of one’s professionalism or of one’s right to access opportunity is wrong. Black Oregonians should feel free to wear their hair any way they like without negative consequences.”

“As a Black mama, I’m raising my daughter to love her hair, to feel proud of it and to see it as beautiful. I want her to feel good about her hair,” [said Denequa Jameelah Rasheed](#), a community leader with Forward Together Action who advocated in support of the bill. “But I’ve also had to prepare her for the ways the world wants to interact with her hair, when people want to touch her hair without her consent or ask intrusive questions. We need the CROWN Act because Black children deserve to feel safe, to feel proud of our hair and how we want to wear it.”

House Bill 2935 passed 28-1 and now goes to Governor Kate Brown for her signature.

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