

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

As Engrossed: H3/15/23 H3/27/23
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1576

By: Representative Scott
By: Senator B. Davis

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE CREATING A RESPECTFUL AND OPEN WORLD FOR NATURAL HAIR (CROWN) ACT; TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED UPON NATURAL, PROTECTIVE, OR CULTURAL HAIRSTYLE IN *PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND IN STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR OR FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION*; TO ADD DEFINITIONS TO THE ARKANSAS CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1993; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH THE CREATING A RESPECTFUL AND OPEN WORLD FOR NATURAL HAIR (CROWN) ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act".

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 10, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-10-137. Discrimination based on natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle in public schools prohibited - Definition.

(a) As used in this section, "natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle" includes without limitation afros, dreadlocks, twists, locs, braids, cornrow braids, Bantu knots, curls, and hair styled to protect hair



texture or for cultural significance.

(b) A school district administrator, board member, teacher, or other employee shall not discriminate against a student based upon the student's natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle.

(c) The Division of Youth Services is exempt from this section.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 61, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-61-142. Discrimination based on natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle in higher education prohibited - Definition.

(a) As used in this section, "natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle" includes without limitation afros, dreadlocks, twists, locs, braids, cornrow braids, Bantu knots, curls, and hair styled to protect hair texture or for cultural significance.

(b) A state-supported two-year or four-year institution of higher education shall not discriminate against a student based upon the student's natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 16-123-102, concerning definitions within the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993, is amended to add additional subdivisions to read as follows:

(9) "Because of national origin" includes without limitation on account of a natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle;

(10) "Because of race" includes without limitation on account of a natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle;

(11) "Ethnic animosity" includes without limitation on account of a natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle;

(12) "Natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle" includes without limitation afros, dreadlocks, twists, locs, braids, cornrow braids, Bantu knots, curls, and hair styled to protect hair texture or for cultural significance; and

(13) "Racial animosity" includes without limitation on account of a natural, protective, or cultural hairstyle.

/s/Scott

APPROVED: 4/10/23