An Act To Prohibit Discrimination in Employment and School Based on Hair Texture or Hairstyle

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on February 25, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Judiciary pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator DAUGTHRY of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Senators: CHIPMAN of Cumberland, LIBBY of Androscoggin, SANBORN of Cumberland, Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, RECKITT of South Portland.
Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §4553, sub-§8-G is enacted to read:

8-G. Protective hairstyle. "Protective hairstyle" includes braids, twists and locks.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §4553, sub-§8-H is enacted to read:

8-H. Race, for purposes of subchapters 3 and 5-B. "Race," for the purposes of subchapters 3 and 5-B, includes traits associated with race, including hair texture, Afro hairstyles and protective hairstyles.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the Maine Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination in employment and education based on hair texture or hairstyle. The bill provides that use of the term "race" includes traits that are associated with race, including hair texture, Afro hairstyles and protective hairstyles. "Protective hairstyles" includes braids, twists and locks. The text is based on language adopted in Maryland and referred to as the CROWN Act, which is an acronym for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.