

SUBJECT: Prohibiting discrimination based on hair texture or protective hairstyle

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Hunter, Hernandez, Guillen, Metcalf, Raymond, Slawson, Smithee, Spiller, S. Thompson, Turner

1 nay — Geren

2 absent — Anchía, Dean

WITNESSES: For — Ash Hall, ACLU of Texas; Sharon Watkins Jones, Children at Risk; Ricardo Martinez, EQTX Equality Texas; Alisha Tuff, IDRA; Angel Carroll, Measure; Meme Styles, Measure and Pi Omega Zeta Chapter; and 7 individuals (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kathryn Kizer, Access Education RRISD; Lauren Johnson and Brian Klosterboer, ACLU of Texas; Maggie Stern, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Brie Franco, City of Austin; Clifford Sparks, City of Dallas; Hon. Rudy Metayer, City of Pflugerville; Rudy Metayer, City of Pflugerville, Texas Black Caucus Foundation; Matthew Garcia, Dallas Regional Chamber; Garry Jones, DFER; Dallas Jones, Elite Change Inc.; Lauren Landry, Equality Texas; Luis Figueroa, Every Texan; Kathy Mitchell, Just Liberty; Charlondra Thompson, MetroTex; Shannon Doyle, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Ana Gonzalez, Texas AFL-CIO; Alejandro Pena, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Whitney Broughton, Texas Association of School Boards; Alycia Castillo, Texas Center for Justice and Equity; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA; Brandon Garcia, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Elaina Fowler, Texas State Teachers Association; Kristen Lenau, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition; Jonathan Feinstein, The Education Trust; Cynthia Van Maanen, Travis County Democratic Party; Tiffany Patterson, United Ways of Texas; Priscilla Barbour, Vistra; and 45 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Paula Pinzon, Casa de Encuentro; Martha Fierro)

On — Jiovanni Jones, Center for Justice Research

**DIGEST:** HB 567 would prohibit any student dress or grooming policy adopted by a school district or public institution of higher education, including a student dress or grooming policy for any extracurricular activity, from discriminating against a hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

The bill would add language to Labor Code provisions that prohibit employment discrimination because of race or on the basis of race to include discrimination because of or on the basis of an employee's hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race. An employer, labor union, or employment agency would commit an unlawful employment practice if the entity adopted or enforced a dress or grooming policy that discriminated against a hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

The bill would add language to the Texas Fair Housing Act prohibitions on discrimination because of race or on the basis of race to include discrimination because of or on the basis of a person's hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

For all provisions, the bill would specify that "protective hairstyle" would include braids, locks, and twists.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023, and would apply only to an unlawful employment practice or discriminatory housing practice that occurred on or after that date.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 567, also known as the CROWN Act, would protect civil rights by prohibiting discrimination based on hair texture and style in education, employment, and housing. Black Texans have suffered negative impacts including lost employment opportunities and suspension from school due to policies that discriminated against their natural hair. Many Black women have changed their hair to fit in at work, often by using chemical straighteners that burn the scalp and recently have been linked to uterine

cancer. Other ways of forcing natural hair to comply with policies regulating appearance such as binding, pinning, or pulling up hair are often impractical and painful. Discriminatory hair policies in schools are damaging to Black students' self-esteem, especially for girls. Certain hairstyles, including braids, locks, and twists, can be necessary preserve natural Black hair. A person's success should not be inhibited by the way their hair grows, which has no bearing on academic or professional performance. Black Texans should be free to embrace their natural hair at home, school, and work.

HB 567 would not create a new protected class but would only add consideration of hair texture and style to existing prohibitions on racial discrimination. The bill also would not interfere with federal regulations on safety and hygiene. Inclusive work environments are more productive, so the bill would not harm businesses.

CRITICS  
SAY:

While preventing hair-based discrimination is a worthy goal, the bill should specify that it would not prevent employers from maintaining health and safety regulations, such as requiring employees to wear hair coverings when working with food.