



September 14, 2020

The Honorable Cedric Richmond  
Member of Congress  
506 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 5309-The CROWN Act of 2019

The National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women is proud to support H.R. 5309-The CROWN Act of 2019. NOBEL Women's mission is to increase the visibility of black women currently in politics and promote the presence of black women in government. The organization also serves as a resource for black women that are interested in leadership development, public service and elected office.

H.R. 5309-The CROWN Act of 2019, the Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural hair (CROWN) Act, corrects an inconsistency in existing anti-discrimination laws to protect against discrimination based on traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles.

Despite great strides made by citizens, legislators, and courts to reverse and resolve the long-lasting damaging effects of racism, hair remains a source of racial discrimination with serious economic and health consequences, especially for Black individuals. This sort of discrimination is encouraged by purportedly "race neutral" grooming and dress code policies in the workplace that enforce a Eurocentric image of professional hair. Enforcing an image of professionalism that was created with European features as the norm disparately affects individuals who do not naturally fall into that norm. Black women, adhering to such grooming policies, must often employ harmful styling practices like time consuming heat straightening, or chemical permanent relaxers, both of which can lead to hair damage and hair loss. Thus, braids, locks, and twists, also known as "protective hairstyles," are necessary for healthy Black hair maintenance.

Adding hair texture and protective hairstyles as a protected class will prohibit an employer from withholding or terminating employment or promotion based on discrimination against the protected employee or applicant's hairstyle. For this reason, we are proud to support H.R. 5309-The CROWN Act of 2019, and respectfully request your aye vote on this measure.

Sincerely,

Representative Karen Camper (TN)  
National President, NOBEL Women

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