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September 27, 2021

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2141 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee
2141 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: H.R. 2116 CROWN Act – SUPPORT

Dear House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Adjoa B. Asamoah. As the racial equity champion who developed the social impact and legislative strategy for the CROWN Act, and who leads the nationwide grassroots movement on behalf of the CROWN Coalition cofounded by Dove, JOY Collective, the National Urban League, and others, it is my honor to submit this letter in full support of (Coleman) **H.R. 2116**.

There is a longstanding history and problematic practice of racial discrimination based on hair in the United States. There have been countless cases where Black people have been discriminated against for wearing their natural hair and/or protective styles, including but not limited to braids, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros, etc.! This prevalent form of racial discrimination includes being fired, passed over for promotions, and even having employment offers rescinded. It impacts the upward mobility of individuals and families, and it has been the reason far too many children have missed school, and had negative educational experiences. It warrants a legislative fix.

Faith Finnidy in Louisiana was sent home in tears because she wore beautiful braids that were deemed a violation of school rules. Deandre Arnold in Texas was told he could not participate in his high school graduation ceremony with his friends, because of his locs—a display of ethnic pride. People representing many ethnicities across the world collectively gasped, witnessing Andrew Johnson (a student wrestler in New Jersey) be forced to make a decision he should have never had to make, and choose between having his locs cut and identity attacked, or forfeiting a match he had earned the right to participate in based on skill.

This type of discrimination is fostered by purportedly “race neutral” grooming and dress code policies in the workplace and in schools that promote a Eurocentric image of professional hair, and perpetuate unfair scrutiny and injustice. An image of professionalism that holds European

features as the norm disparately affects Black people. Black children and adults adhering to such grooming policies can often feel compelled to employ styling practices to alter the natural characteristics of their hair, including unhealthy time-consuming heat straightening and chemical permanent relaxers which can lead to hair damage and hair loss.

While some anti-discrimination laws protect the choice to wear an afro, afros are not the only natural presentation of Black hair. **H.R. 2116** will ensure protection against race-based hair discrimination by extending statutory protection to hair texture and protective styles.

While the CROWN Coalition has supported members championing the CROWN Act in more than 25 state legislatures across the country to outlaw race-based hair discrimination, with fourteen (14) of them passing and enacting legislation to date, it remains critically important to pass the CROWN Act at the federal level in both chambers, to ensure all people in our society are protected.

On behalf of the CROWN Coalition, we thank Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman for her leadership and championing the CROWN Act in the House, and urge you to support **H.R. 2116**.

Sincerely,

Adjoa B. Asamoah
CEO, ABA Consulting/Co-Creator of CROWN Coalition

Orlena Nwokah Blanchard
President, JOY Collective/Co-Creator of CROWN Coalition

Esi Eggleston Bracey
COO, North America Beauty and Personal Care, Unilever/Co-Creator of CROWN Coalition

Kelli Richardson Lawson
CEO, JOY Collective/Co-Creator of CROWN Coalition

Supporting Members of the Coalition and Supporters of The CROWN Act include:

1. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
2. NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
3. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
4. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
5. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
6. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
7. The Links, Inc.
8. Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
9. National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)
10. National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women)
11. African American Mayors Association (AAMA)
12. National Action Network (NAN)

13. Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
14. Black Women's Agenda
15. National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)
16. Black Women's Roundtable
17. National Women's Law Center
18. Black Women Organized for Political Action
19. National Black MBA Association, Inc.
20. National Black Child Development Institute, Inc. (NBCDI)
21. U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.
22. Anti-Defamation League San Francisco
23. Anti-Defamation League Los Angeles
24. Anti-Defamation League Chicago
25. YWCA, White Plains & Central Westchester
26. YWCA of the Greater Capital Region
27. YWCA USA
28. Black Business Association
29. Girls, Inc.
30. Black Women's Health Imperative
31. Black Women for Wellness Action Project
32. Greater Sacramento Urban League
33. National Coalition of 100 Black Women-Sacramento Chapter
34. EMERGE: Natural Beauty Industry Alliance
35. Beauty and Barber Empowerment Center
36. Ujima, Inc.
37. Hip Hop Sisters Foundation
38. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
39. Equal Rights Advocates
40. Public Health Advocates
41. American Academy of Pediatrics
42. Personal Care Products Council (PCPC)
43. Courage Campaign
44. Greenlining Institute
45. Women Impacting Public Policy, Inc.
46. Professional Beauty Association
47. The Natural Hair Industry Convention
48. Curly Girl Collective
49. Save A Girl, Save A World
50. EARTHGIRL
51. California Black Health Network
52. Black American Political Association of California
53. Mothers of Black Boys United
54. National Association of University Women-Windy City Branch
55. National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC)

56. Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)
57. California Black Chamber of Commerce
58. Women's Foundation of California
59. National Association of Social Workers-California Chapter
60. California Employment Lawyers Association
61. California Civil Liberties Advocacy
62. California Teachers Association
63. American Federation of State; County and Municipal Employees
64. NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
65. ACLU New Jersey
66. ACLU California
67. ACLU of Northern California
68. ACLU of Southern California
69. ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties
70. ACLU Georgia
71. ACLU New Mexico
72. Berkeley City Council
73. National Lawyers Guild – Sacramento Chapter
74. Los Angeles County Office of Education
75. Los Angeles Community College District
76. City and County of San Francisco Department on the Status of Women
77. NYC Black Women's Political Club
78. ImpactEDI
79. Building Opportunities and Opening Minds (BOOM)
80. Junior League of Boston
81. Association of Black Psychologists
82. Black Kids Swim
83. Hustlers Guild
84. Mocha Moms, Inc.