

## **Opinion: Stop policing people of color's hair and pass the CROWN Act**

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<https://www.chron.com/culture/article/Texas-Crown-Act-law-Black-hair-length-16135255.php>

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Texas seems to be hell bent on policing Black peoples' hair — and it needs to stop. Immediately.

In Troy, an 11-year-old Native and African-American student spent more than a week in in-school suspension after administrators said his braided hairstyle violated the dress code, per 25 News KXXV's Jarell Baker.

Barbers Hill Independent School District voted unanimously in July of 2020 to uphold a school policy that allowed the district to suspend DeAndre Arnold and his cousin Kaden Bradford for refusing to cut their dreadlocks, even barring Arnold from his senior prom and high school graduation.

Such incidents are far from isolated in the Lone Star state, which begs the question: Why are Texas schools so determined to uphold dated rules that seemingly exist only to police the appearance of Black and brown students?

People of color, especially Black people, have long felt pressure to alter their natural hair to conform to what society has deemed "acceptable." It's demeaning, and—quite frankly—sad. And it's time we proudly rocked all of our kinks and curls without being punished for it.

That's why the CROWN Act is important.

“Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” or CROWN, is an act that would prohibit race-based hair discrimination in Texas schools and workplaces. The CROWN Act would make it illegal for employers and educators to deny an individual employment or educational opportunities due to the length, texture or style of their hair.

It's sad that there even has to be a law in place, considering no other race has to deal with their hair being a Civil Rights issue. But here we are.

The law hasn't passed in Texas (yet), but with April 27 being Texas' CROWN Act Day, Texas Legislative Black Caucus members are working around the clock to see that it happens.

As a Black woman, I am tired of feeling like I can't or shouldn't enter certain spaces because my hair "isn't done" or straightened. I am tired of being asked if my hair is real or if someone can touch it. It's the hair I was born with, not a science experiment.

This is also the reason people of color get so upset about outside races wearing braids or other protective hairstyles. The issue is not the style itself, but the fact that you have an entire group of people who are seen as "less professional" in the workplace and even denied jobs for rocking styles they created while others are allowed to copy it and receive compliments? It's disgusting.

The CROWN Act is necessary for the culture, and the fact that Texas isn't moving quicker to pass it is quite telling.

Whether anyone wants to admit it, hair discrimination is race discrimination. And we've had enough.