

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4224

To prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s texture or style of hair.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 1, 2024

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s texture  
or style of hair.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Creating a Respectful  
5 and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2024” or the  
6 “CROWN Act of 2024”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSE.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Throughout United States history, society  
10 has used (in conjunction with skin color) hair tex-

1        ture and hairstyle to classify individuals on the basis  
2        of race.

3            (2) Like one’s skin color, one’s hair has served  
4        as a basis of race and national origin discrimination.

5            (3) Racial and national origin discrimination  
6        can and do occur because of longstanding racial and  
7        national origin biases and stereotypes associated  
8        with hair texture and style.

9            (4) For example, people of African descent have  
10       been deprived of educational and employment oppor-  
11       tunities because they are adorned with natural or  
12       protective hairstyles in which hair is tightly coiled or  
13       tightly curled, or worn in locs, cornrows, twists,  
14       braids, Bantu knots, or Afros.

15           (5) Racial and national origin discrimination is  
16       reflected in school and workplace policies and prac-  
17       tices that bar natural or protective hairstyles com-  
18       monly worn by people of African descent.

19           (6) For example, as recently as 2018, the  
20       United States Armed Forces had grooming policies  
21       that barred natural or protective hairstyles that  
22       servicewomen of African descent commonly wear and  
23       that described these hairstyles as “unkempt”.

1           (7) In 2018, the United States Armed Forces  
2 rescinded these policies and recognized that this de-  
3 scription perpetuated derogatory racial stereotypes.

4           (8) The United States Armed Forces also rec-  
5 ognized that prohibitions against natural or protec-  
6 tive hairstyles that African-American servicewomen  
7 are commonly adorned with are racially discrimina-  
8 tory and bear no relationship to African-American  
9 servicewomen’s occupational qualifications and their  
10 ability to serve and protect the Nation.

11           (9) Some Federal courts have narrowly inter-  
12 preted the protections against discrimination on the  
13 basis of race or national origin found in existing  
14 Federal civil rights laws, including provisions of the  
15 Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.),  
16 section 1977 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C.  
17 1981), and the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601  
18 et seq.), thereby permitting, for example, employers  
19 to discriminate against people of African descent  
20 who wear natural or protective hairstyles, even  
21 though the employment policies involved are not re-  
22 lated to workers’ ability to perform their jobs.

23           (10) Applying these narrow interpretations has  
24 resulted in a lack of Federal civil rights protection  
25 for individuals who are discriminated against on the

1 basis of characteristics that are commonly associated  
2 with race and national origin.

3 (11) Starting in 2019, State legislatures and  
4 municipal bodies throughout the United States have  
5 introduced and passed legislation that rejects certain  
6 Federal courts' restrictive interpretation of race and  
7 national origin, and expressly classifies race and na-  
8 tional origin discrimination as inclusive of discrimi-  
9 nation on the basis of natural or protective hair-  
10 styles commonly associated with race and national  
11 origin.

12 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
13 gress that—

14 (1) the Federal Government should acknowl-  
15 edge that individuals who have hair texture or wear  
16 a hairstyle that is historically and contemporarily as-  
17 sociated with African Americans or persons of Afri-  
18 can descent have suffered harmful discrimination in  
19 schools, workplaces, and other contexts based upon  
20 longstanding race and national origin stereotypes  
21 and biases;

22 (2) a clear and comprehensive law should ad-  
23 dress the deprivation of educational, employment,  
24 and other opportunities on the basis of hair texture

1 and hairstyle that are commonly associated with  
2 race or national origin;

3 (3) clear, consistent, and enforceable legal  
4 standards must be provided to redress the wide-  
5 spread incidences of race and national origin dis-  
6 crimination based upon hair texture and hairstyle in  
7 schools, workplaces, housing, federally funded insti-  
8 tutions, and other contexts;

9 (4) it is necessary to prevent educational, em-  
10 ployment, and other decisions, practices, and policies  
11 generated by or reflecting negative biases and  
12 stereotypes related to race or national origin;

13 (5) the Federal Government must play a key  
14 role in enforcing Federal civil rights laws in a way  
15 that secures equal educational, employment, and  
16 other opportunities for all individuals regardless of  
17 their race or national origin;

18 (6) the Federal Government must play a central  
19 role in enforcing the standards established under  
20 this Act on behalf of individuals who suffer race or  
21 national origin discrimination based upon hair tex-  
22 ture and hairstyle;

23 (7) it is necessary to prohibit and provide rem-  
24 edies for the harms suffered as a result of race or

1 national origin discrimination on the basis of hair  
2 texture and hairstyle; and

3 (8) it is necessary to mandate that school,  
4 workplace, and other applicable standards be applied  
5 in a nondiscriminatory manner and to explicitly pro-  
6 hibit the adoption or implementation of grooming re-  
7 quirements that disproportionately impact people of  
8 African descent.

9 (c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to institute  
10 definitions of race and national origin for Federal civil  
11 rights laws that effectuate the comprehensive scope of pro-  
12 tection Congress intended to be afforded by such laws and  
13 Congress' objective to eliminate race and national origin  
14 discrimination in the United States.

15 **SEC. 3. FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—No individual in the United  
17 States shall be excluded from participation in, be denied  
18 the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under,  
19 any program or activity receiving Federal financial assist-  
20 ance, based on the individual's hair texture or hairstyle,  
21 if that hair texture or that hairstyle is commonly associ-  
22 ated with a particular race or national origin (including  
23 a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled,  
24 locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

1           (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-  
2 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-  
3 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was  
4 incorporated in title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964  
5 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), and as if a violation of sub-  
6 section (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section  
7 601 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d).

8           (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

9                   (1) the term “program or activity” has the  
10 meaning given the term in section 606 of the Civil  
11 Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–4a); and

12                   (2) the terms “race” and “national origin”  
13 mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the  
14 term in section 601 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d)  
15 and “national origin” within the meaning of the  
16 term in that section 601.

17 **SEC. 4. HOUSING PROGRAMS.**

18           (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States  
19 shall be subjected to a discriminatory housing practice  
20 based on the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair  
21 texture or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a  
22 particular race or national origin (including a hairstyle in  
23 which hair is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, corn-  
24 rows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

1           (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-  
2 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-  
3 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was  
4 incorporated in the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601  
5 et seq.), and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated  
6 as if it was a discriminatory housing practice.

7           (c) DEFINITION.—In this section—

8                   (1) the terms “discriminatory housing practice”  
9                   and “person” have the meanings given the terms in  
10                   section 802 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C.  
11                   3602); and

12                   (2) the terms “race” and “national origin”  
13                   mean, respectively, “race” within the meaning of the  
14                   term in section 804 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 3604)  
15                   and “national origin” within the meaning of the  
16                   term in that section 804.

17 **SEC. 5. PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS.**

18           (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States  
19 shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section  
20 201, 202, or 203 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42  
21 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), based on the person’s hair texture  
22 or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hairstyle is com-  
23 monly associated with a particular race or national origin  
24 (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly coiled or



1 tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots,  
2 and Afros).

3 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-  
4 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-  
5 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was  
6 incorporated in title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,  
7 and as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if  
8 it was a violation of section 201, 202, or 203, as appro-  
9 priate, of such Act.

10 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the terms “race”  
11 and “national origin” mean, respectively, “race” within  
12 the meaning of the term in section 201 of that Act (42  
13 U.S.C. 2000a) and “national origin” within the meaning  
14 of the term in that section 201.

15 **SEC. 6. EMPLOYMENT.**

16 (a) PROHIBITION.—It shall be an unlawful employ-  
17 ment practice for an employer, employment agency, labor  
18 organization, or joint labor-management committee con-  
19 trolling apprenticeship or other training or retraining (in-  
20 cluding on-the-job training programs) to fail or refuse to  
21 hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to dis-  
22 criminate against an individual, based on the individual’s  
23 hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture or that hair-  
24 style is commonly associated with a particular race or na-  
25 tional origin (including a hairstyle in which hair is tightly

1 coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists, braids,  
2 Bantu knots, and Afros).

3 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-  
4 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-  
5 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was  
6 incorporated in title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964  
7 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.), and as if a violation of sub-  
8 section (a) was treated as if it was a violation of section  
9 703 or 704, as appropriate, of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
10 2000e–2, 2000e–3).

11 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the terms “per-  
12 son”, “race”, and “national origin” have the meanings  
13 given the terms in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of  
14 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e).

15 **SEC. 7. EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States  
17 shall be subjected to a practice prohibited under section  
18 1977 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981), based on  
19 the person’s hair texture or hairstyle, if that hair texture  
20 or that hairstyle is commonly associated with a particular  
21 race or national origin (including a hairstyle in which hair  
22 is tightly coiled or tightly curled, locs, cornrows, twists,  
23 braids, Bantu knots, and Afros).

24 (b) ENFORCEMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be en-  
25 forced in the same manner and by the same means, includ-

1 ing with the same jurisdiction, as if such subsection was  
2 incorporated in section 1977 of the Revised Statutes, and  
3 as if a violation of subsection (a) was treated as if it was  
4 a violation of that section 1977.

5 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

6       Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit defini-  
7 tions of race or national origin under the Civil Rights Act  
8 of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), the Fair Housing Act  
9 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), or section 1977 of the Revised  
10 Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981).

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