



BLM RI PAC POSITION: SUPPORT

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***The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara
House Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island, 02903***

Honorable Joseph M. McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am respectfully writing in support of House Bill 7724, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- OFFENSES PERTAINING TO SCHOOLS – THE CROWN ACT. The Black Lives Matter RI PAC (BLM RI PAC) appreciates the General Assembly's support in advancing this important piece of legislation, critical to our families and communities across the State of Rhode Island.

At the BLM RI PAC, we strongly believe that all beauty should be welcomed in all places and institutions. Narrow beauty standards make it difficult for Black & Brown people, particularly women and girls to freely celebrate their own beauty. While all women experience pressure to conform to certain standards of appearance, society's bias has resulted in unfair judgment and discrimination against Black women based on natural hair and protective hairstyles, including braids, locs, and twists, that are inherent to their race. The CROWN Act, which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair, is a law that prohibits racial discrimination based on natural textures and protective hairstyles. It defines the terms "race and ethnicity" to include ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, and ethnic background and inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles.

In the US, the law in many states does not currently afford protection for race-based hair discrimination, even if the hairstyle is inherent to racial identity. That means, Black women can be denied opportunities for employment or professional advancement without consequence. It means Black children can be denied entry to school or educational opportunities because of their natural hair. This is NOT OK.

The BLM RI PAC has long supported this legislation based on the fact that:

- A Black woman is 80% more likely to change her natural hair to meet social norms or expectations at work.
- Black women are 1.5 times more likely to be sent home or know of a Black woman sent home from the workplace because of her hair.
- 1 in 2 Black children have experienced hair discrimination as early as five years old – and the impact can last a lifetime.

As a Board Member and Policy Advisor with the BLM RI PAC, I am committed to supporting legislation that prioritizes race-based equity & strongly encourage you to support this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

LaJuan Allen

Board Member & Policy Advisor, Black Lives Matter RI PAC