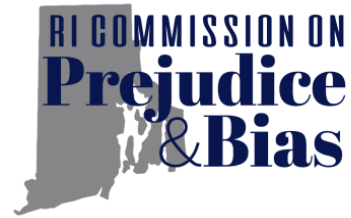


April 7, 2025

TO: House Education Chair McNamara
Senate Judiciary Chair LaMountain



RE: RI Commission on Prejudice & Bias supports S0519 & H5841 - protective hairstyles bills

Dear Senator LaMountain, Representative Mcnamara, and committee members,

The Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias is writing to express our strong support for 2025 bills [S0519](#) and [H5841](#), which will amend AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- OFFENSES PERTAINING TO SCHOOLS to include protections for natural hair styles and textures.

The RICPB is a state commission created by law in 1981 with a mission “to study and report on all forms of prejudice and hatred in RI” and to “revise and codify, if possible, all laws relating to all forms of prejudice, bias and hatred.” Commissioners include community leaders, state legislators, law enforcement officers, and Attorney General staff.

By affirming that students cannot be discriminated against for their natural hair or protective styles, these bills represent a meaningful step forward in promoting educational equity. They will help reduce disproportionate school discipline, foster inclusion, and affirm the identities of all students, regardless of race, gender, or gender identity.

We urge the committees to vote in favor of S0519 and H5841 and to stand with students and families across Rhode Island in protecting their dignity and rights. Thank you for your commitment to justice and fairness in our schools.

Sincerely,

B. Joe Reddish, III
Chair
Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias
calloutprejudiceri@gmail.com