



Hon. Joseph McNamara  
Chair of House Education Committee  
Members of the House Education Committee

**RE: Support for House Bill #5841 (THE CROWN ACT)**

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the House Committee on Education:  
I write to you as Co-Chair of the Rhode Island Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American, and Pacific Islander (RIBLIA) Caucus in strong support of House Bill #5841, known as the “CROWN Act”. Today, our Caucus stands at the largest it’s ever been, with 21 members representing communities across our state.

This year, the caucus is prioritizing 15 bills that reflect our unwavering commitment to defending the marginalized and ensuring a fair and equitable future for all Rhode Islanders. **Aligning with our commitment to improving the living and economic conditions of our constituents, the RIBLIA Caucus supports House Bill #5841 by Rep. Stewart which would prohibit racial discrimination by expanding the definition of race to include hair texture and protective hairstyles.**

For far too long, natural and protective hairstyles have been unfairly stigmatized — resulting in harmful consequences like school suspensions, job loss, and social exclusion. According to a study conducted by Dove, it was found that Black women with coily or textured hair are twice as likely to face workplace microaggressions compared to those with straight hair.<sup>1</sup> As a state that is home to over 13,000 Black women, it's time we join states like Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine in affirming the right of all people to wear their natural hair with pride — free from discrimination and bias. Passing this legislation is not just about hair, it's about dignity, equity, and the freedom to show up as your full self.

The CROWN Act is a crucial step toward making Rhode Island a more inclusive and equitable place for all. Members of the RIBLIA Caucus urge passage of this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

**Rep. David Morales**  
*Co-Chair RIBLIA Caucus*

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<sup>1</sup> **CROWN 2023 Workplace Research Study, co-commissioned by Dove and LinkedIn:**  
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/dove-partners-with-linkedin-in-support-of-the-crown-act-to-help-end-race-based-hair-discrimination-in-the-workplace-301748816.html>