



LAKESHIA MYERS

Wisconsin State Representative • 12th Assembly District

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FOR IMMEDIATE ADVISORY:

February 9, 2021

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Representative LaKeshia Myers Reintroduces CROWN Act Aimed at Eliminating Hair Discrimination in Wisconsin

MADISON – Representative LaKeshia Myers (D-Milwaukee) reintroduced legislation today that will alleviate hair discrimination in the state of Wisconsin. The bill, known as The CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural hair) Act, would update Wisconsin state statutes to include protections for individuals who wear natural hairstyles predominately worn by African Americans such as afros, braids, locs, and twists.

The bipartisan piece of legislation received a hearing last session in the Assembly Committee on Constitution & Ethics, but was not presented to the entire legislature for a vote.

Myers said, “I remain steadfast in my commitment to see this legislation through until it is signed into law. The necessity for all people to be affirmed and accepted for who they are is paramount. As Black people, our natural hair textures must not be weaponized and used as a tool of rejection when seeking or maintaining employment. As we continue to experience shifts in our demography, it is our duty to erase policies steeped in discrimination and embrace equity.”

While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex, race, and color, there is no legal precedent in state or federal statute to protect individuals against discrimination based on natural hair texture and styles. By specifying in statute that the protected class of race also includes traits historically associated with racial identification, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles, this bill ensures defense against grooming policies that often affect people of color.

Presently, federal law protects one’s choice to wear an afro. Representative Myers said, “This protection was based on a federal discrimination lawsuit in 1976, afros are not the only natural hairstyles worn. It is important that our state statutes reflect the societal changes that have occurred in the last forty-four years. Updating our state statutes to end discrimination based on hair textures and protective styles will help to foster healthier, more productive, and more diverse workplace environments. It is my hope that my colleagues in both chambers will support this legislation and do what is necessary to advance equity and inclusion for all Wisconsinites.”

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