



West Virginia University
The Student Assembly - Student Government Association
Assembly Bill: AP-2020-01

Title: A PROCLAMATION STATING SUPPORT FOR WEST VIRGINIA STATE SENATE BILL 850

Short Title:	Supporting the CROWN Act
Author(s):	Myya Helm, Senator Stephanie Buggs, College Senator (Eberly College of Arts and Sciences) Camryn Pressley, Senator Victoria Teufel, Senator
Sponsor(s):	Sarah Ihlenfeld, Senator Marley Nash, Senator Dominic Cunningham, Senator Amelia Jones, Senator Josh Harman, Senator Kevin Donnelly, Senator Camden Givens, College Senator (College of Physical and Sport Sciences) Travis Rawson, President Pro Tempore
First Reading Date	02-19-2020
Second Reading Date	02-26-2020

Whereas, West Virginia University’s Mission Statement commits to “creating a diverse and inclusive culture that advances education, healthcare and prosperity for all;” and

Whereas, the West Virginia University Student Government Association’s Mission and Vision promote the principles of diversity and inclusion; and

Whereas, hair discrimination remains all too familiar to many communities of color, who often find their hair policed by dress codes in schools, in athletics, and in the workplace; and

Whereas, according to the 2016 “Good Hair” study by the Perception Institute¹, a majority of individuals show implicit bias against textured hair; and

Whereas, on December 18, 2019, Matthew Moore, a freshman basketball player at Woodrow Wilson High School in Beckley, West Virginia was benched by the head coach because his dreadlocks were not considered that of a “neat” haircut²; and

Whereas, the CROWN (Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair) Research Study³ released by Dove in 2019 found that black women are 50% more likely to be sent home from the workplace because of their hair and 80% of black women feel the need to change their hair from its natural state to “fit in;” and

¹ <https://perception.org/goodhair/results/>

² <https://woay.tv/mother-of-woodrow-wilson-athlete-benched-over-hairstyle-inspires-anti-discrimination-bill/>

³ <https://www.thecrownact.com/research>

18 **Whereas**, Dove also found that black women’s hair is 3.4x more likely to be perceived as unprofessional when
19 compared to other hair types; and
20

21 **Whereas**, pervasive discrimination against natural hair remains a significant barrier to the academic, athletic, and
22 professional advancement and prosperity of men and women of color; and
23

24 **Whereas**, no United States federal law currently affords protection for race-based hair discrimination, even if the
25 hairstyle is inherent to racial identity; and
26

27 **Whereas**, the CROWN Act legally ensures protection against discrimination based on hairstyles by extending
28 statutory protection to hair texture and protective styles; and
29

30 **Whereas**, New Jersey, Tennessee, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Ohio have all proposed legislation to
31 prohibit “race-based hair discrimination”, with California and New York enacting similar legislation in July of
32 2019⁴; and
33

34 **Whereas**, West Virginia Senate Bill 850, also known as the CROWN Act, protects against discrimination
35 statewide by expanding the definition of discrimination based on race in the West Virginia Human Rights Act to
36 include “hair textures and protective hairstyles historically associated with a particular race.”; and
37

38 **Whereas**, West Virginia Senate Bill 850 also states that “The term “protective hairstyles” includes, but is not
39 limited to, hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.”
40

41 ***Therefore, be it proclaimed by the Student Assembly of West Virginia University:***
42

43 Section 1: The West Virginia University Student Government Association urges the West Virginia State Senate to
44 pass Senate Bill 850,
45

46 Section 2: The West Virginia University Student Government Association fully supports the enactment of the
47 CROWN Act in West Virginia,
48

49 Section 3: Upon passage and approval, this legislation shall be forwarded to:
50

51 **Mandates:**

52 G. Corey Farris, Dean of Students
53 Dr. Thanh Le, Director, Student Engagement and Leadership (Advisor)
54 Kate Dye, Student Body President
55 Meshea L. Poore, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
56 J. Spenser Darden, Director, Diversity Initiatives and Community Engagement
57 Marjorie Fuller, Director, Center for Black Culture and Research
58 Jerry Carr, President, Morgantown-Kingwood NAACP Branch #3241
59 Brianna Herscher, President, West Virginia University Collegiate Chapter of the NAACP #38AF
60 Mitch Carmichael, West Virginia State Senator, 4th District (Senate President)
61 Stephen Baldwin, West Virginia State Senator, 10th District
62 Robert D. Beach, West Virginia State Senator, 13th District
63 Charles H. Clements, West Virginia State Senator, 2nd District
64 Sue Cline, West Virginia State Senator, 9th District
65 Paul Hardesty, West Virginia State Senator, 9th District
66 Glenn D. Jeffries, West Virginia State Senator, 8th District
67 Richard D. Lindsay II, West Virginia State Senator, 8th District
68 Mark R. Maynard, West Virginia State Senator, 6th District
69 John R. Pitsenbarger, West Virginia State Senator, 11th District

4 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/09/19/more-states-are-trying-protect-black-employees-who-want-wear-natural-hairstyles-work/>

-)0 Michael J. Romano, West Virginia State Senator, 12th District
-)1 Patricia Puertas Rucker, West Virginia State Senator, 16th District
-)2 Randy E. Smith, West Virginia State Senator, 14th District
-)3 Tom Takubo, West Virginia State Senator, 17th District
-)4 Ryan W. Weld, West Virginia State Senator, 1st District
-)5 Michael A. Woelfel, West Virginia State Senator, 5th District
-)6 Charles S. Trump IV, West Virginia State Senator, 15th District
-)7 Roger Hanshaw, West Virginia Delegate, 33rd District (Speaker of the House of Delegates)
-)8 Danielle Walker, West Virginia Delegate, 51st District
-)9 American Civil Liberties Union of West Virginia
- !0 Our Future West Virginia
- !1 Call to Action for Racial Equality (CARE) Coalition of West Virginia
- !2 Daily Athenaeum