



## BILL SYNOPSIS

**Committee: Labor**

**Bill 19-0481**

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### **Banning Discrimination Based on Hair Texture and Protective Hairstyles**

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***Sponsor: Councilmember Robert Stokes***

***Introduced: December 16, 2019***

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of prohibiting discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles.

**Effective:** 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date of enactment

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### **Agency Reports**

Department of Law	Comments
Department of Human Resources	Comments
Office of Equity and Civil Rights	

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## Analysis

### Baltimore City Code

Article 4 – Community Relations; Section 1-1(r-1) and 1-1(s-1) Baltimore City Code (Edition 2000)

### Background

Discrimination based on race is prohibited under specified State laws. The Office of Equity and Civil Rights is charged with investigating and enforcing these laws under the Community Relations Article of the Baltimore City Code.

In 2019, Montgomery County passed the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act, making it the first county in the United States to ban discrimination based on hairstyles. Recently, similar legislation has been enacted in California, New Jersey, and New York. During the 2020 Maryland General Assembly session the legislature followed behind these other states and passed a law that protected hairstyles such as braids, twists, and locks.

### Proposed Language

In the legislation before the Baltimore City Council the below listed sections would be created to protect certain hairstyles, and expand the definition of race as it relates to hairstyles:

(R-1) PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLES.

(1) IN GENERAL.

“PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLES” MEANS HAIRSTYLES THAT PROTECT AGAINST SPLIT ENDS, KNOTTING, OR GENERAL DAMAGE, AND ALSO HELP RETAIN THE LENGTH OF THE HAIR.

(2) EXAMPLES.

“PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLES” INCLUDES HAIRSTYLES SUCH AS BRAIDS, TWISTS, AND LOCKS.

(S-1) RACE.

“RACE” MEANS TRAITS HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH RACE, INCLUDING HAIR TEXTURE AND PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLES.

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## Additional Information

**Fiscal Note:** Not Available

**Information Source(s):** Montgomery County Council, Maryland General Assembly, Agency Reports

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