


Quinton M H

F R O M	Name & Title	Quinton Herbert, Director and Chief Human Capital Officer	CITY OF BALTIMORE MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Department of Human Resources 7 East Redwood St., Baltimore, MD 21202		
	Subject	CITY COUNCIL BILL #19-0481/Banning Discrimination Based on Hair Texture and Protective Hairstyles		

TO: The Honorable Bernard C. “Jack” Young and
Members of the Baltimore City Council
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, Room 409

DATE: January 22, 2020

Summary of the Bill

Council Bill 19-0481 proposes the prohibition of discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles by including the definitions and examples for “protective hairstyles” and modifying the definition of “race” to include hair texture and protective hairstyles.

DHR’s Recommendation

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) reviewed the above captioned Bill. For the reasons stated below, in the “*Comments and Analysis*” portion of the Memo, DHR supports this Bill with suggestions for further consideration.

Comments and Analysis

DHR is sensitive to the maintenance of a professional standard in the context of how broad the definition of *protective hairstyles* is in the proposed legislation.

- It is the suggestion of the department to consider more prescriptive language regarding what defines a protective hairstyle and to include a reference to immutable characteristics.

DHR recognizes the possibility of employers facing hardship in instances where an otherwise lawful employment action is challenged on the unsubstantiated, superfluous claim of hair discrimination and the administrative burden erroneous claims may create for the City.

Finally, the department suggests some caveat in the legislation for deferring to professional health and safety standards in occupations where it could be necessary, such as first responders, food preparation, etc.