

HCS HBs 1900, 1591 & 2515 -- DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

SPONSOR: Proudie

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 6 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0 with 1 voting present.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1900.

This bill creates the "Missouri Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (Missouri CROWN) Act", which governs discriminatory practices as they relate to protective hairstyles.

This bill specifies that no person shall be subjected to discrimination based on the person's hair texture or protective hairstyle, if that protective hairstyle or texture is commonly associated with a particular race or origin, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives or benefits from state financial assistance, as that term is defined in the Act, or that enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid; provided, however, that such institution may require the use of hair nets or coverings or may require that hair be secured for safety purposes in any career and technical training course or class to comply with safety regulations and standards of the course or class throughout the duration of the course or class.

The provisions of this bill does not apply to an educational institution that is controlled by a religious organization if the application of such provision would not be consistent with the religious tenets of that organization.

This bill prohibits educational institutions from implementing discriminatory student dress or grooming policies for school-sponsored events, such as extracurricular activities.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill is to prevent the discrimination of people based on their hair and cultural identity, and that the way people wear their natural hair has cultural and historic significance. Supporters say that this bill seeks to ensure that children and minorities are not discriminated against for their hair texture and seeks to relieve the fear of being ostracized.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Proudie; Cheryl Adelstein, Jewish Community Relations Council; City of St. Louis; American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; Makhi Jaff; Chenia Walker; Yolanda Martin; Michelle Smith; National Association of Social Workers Mo Chapter; Abortion Action Missouri (Formerly Pro Choice Missouri); and Denise Lieberman.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.