



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner
Chloe Eudaly, Commissioner

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Sanchez and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

We write to express our support of HB 4107, which makes it unlawful for places of public accommodation to refuse to accept United States coins or currency as payment for goods and services and clarifies the meaning of race to include natural hair, hair texture, hair type and protective hairstyles for the purposes of prohibited discrimination based on race, color or national origin.

Portland's Racial Equity Strategy commits to addressing institutional racism through the examination and dismantling of systemic policies and practices that serve to perpetuate disparities. According to Portland City Charter, it is the policy of the City of Portland to eliminate discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or source of income.

The Federal Reserve estimated there are 55 million unbanked or underbanked adult Americans in 2018, which account for 22 percent of U.S. households. According to an FDIC 2017 survey, almost 30% of residents living in the Portland-Hillsboro-Vancouver area are underbanked or unbanked completely. People of color are up to five times more likely to be unbanked, which means cash discrimination disproportionately affects these communities. Low-income people and undocumented immigrants also rely on cash as a primary form of currency, and it is vital to provide equal access to public accommodations for these communities.

There are a multitude of news stories about young people being ostracized from certain activities or even having their hair forcibly cut. Just last month, DeAndre Arnold—a high school senior in Mont Belvieu, Texas—was told that he would not be able to walk during his graduation if he didn't cut his dreadlocks. This practice of institutional racism is not just discriminatory, it is inhumane, traumatic for young people, and it is not welcome in our community. The CROWN ("Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural

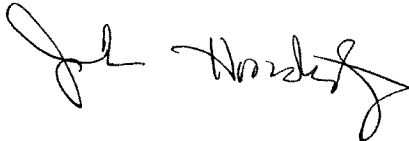
Hair”) Act language (which HB 4107 includes), addresses this discrimination and has already become law in California, New York, and New Jersey.

HB 4107 aligns with our Racial Equity Strategy by preventing certain businesses from turning people away solely because they pay in cash, thereby dismantling a systemic policy that perpetuates disparity by providing equal access to unbanked people. The bill also advances our Racial Equity Strategy and our goal to eliminate discrimination based on race by prohibiting discrimination based on physical characteristics and hair styles associated with certain communities and providing for relief when discrimination is based on racially-specific hairstyles. In sum, HB 4107 is deeply aligned with Portland’s values—passing this legislation will protect vulnerable communities from harmful discrimination. For these reasons, we strongly support HB 4107 and we urge you to make it law in Oregon.

Sincerely,



Ted Wheeler
Mayor



Jo Ann Hardesty
Commissioner



Amanda Fritz
Commissioner



Chloe Eudaly
Commissioner