



Walter Robinson

May 13th, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

RE: Support HB 2935 the CROWN Act

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

My name is Walter Robinson II and I'm testifying on behalf of Forward Together Action. Forward Together Action works to build political power that uplifts the leadership of women of color, gender nonconforming people, and Indigenous communities. We know that when women of color, gender nonconfirming people, and Indegenous communities lead--and lawmakers listen--we all win.

I am testifying today on behalf of HB 2935 A also known as the CROWN Act.

Recently I cut my locs that I had been growing for 12 years. During that time, if I had \$1 for every time someone touched my hair without asking or asked to touch my hair, I would probably be a millionaire by now. Beyond the microaggressions that I experienced personally it was very surprising to also have to have these same experiences in a professional setting. One experience that stands out the most for me was during my first job after college as a personal banker for US Bank. During my weekly check in with my Branch Manager, he asked me if I ever considered cutting my locs as it would look more professional to be clean shaven in the workplace. I was a bit taken aback that this was even a conversation I was having with them because I was not violating the company's corporate grooming policies. While this was one of act of discrimination I have experienced professionally, it pales in comparison to what Black women face daily in professional spaces. According to the CROWN Research study conducted by the Joy Collective:

- Black women are 1.5 times likely to be sent home from the workplace because of their hair
- 3.4 times likely to be perceived as unprofessional



- 30% more likely to "corporate grooming policies" handed to them than non-Black women;
- And their hairstyles are consistently rated lower or "less likely" for job performance

"Corporate grooming polices" are rooted in white supremacy and Black folks should not have to sacrifice the integrity and health of their hair to assimilate into white beauty standards. Especially, when Black beauty standards are being appropriated everyday. We at Forward Together Action strongly support HB 2935 (Crown Act) and urge this committee to vote yes in support of the Crown Act. Thank you again for your time today and I will be here to answer any questions that you may have.

In solidarity,

Walter Robinson II