



May 13, 2021

**To:** The Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

**From:** Emily Wanous, Legislative Director, Oregon Student Association

**Re:** Support of HB 2935, Oregon CROWN Act

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

My name is Emily Wanous and I am the legislative director for the Oregon Student Association (OSA). OSA is The Oregon Student Association is a statewide, student-led advocacy and organizing nonprofit established in 1975 to represent, serve, and protect the collective interests of students in post-secondary education in Oregon. We represent over 80,000 students and work to make a quality education more affordable and accessible for **all** Oregonians. I am testifying today in support of **HB2935**, a bill that would prohibit discrimination based on race-specific hairstyles, on behalf of our organization.

Since California first passed their CROWN Act in 2019, black students from University of Oregon with support from students at other institutions, have been working on elevating this issue in Oregon. Oregon's first CROWN Act was introduced in the 2020 legislative session with bipartisan support. Let's make sure this bill sees passage to ensure that race-based hairstyles and textures, such as twists, knots, dreadlocks, and braids, are protected in our state.

HB2935 ensures Black Oregonians are not discriminated against for wearing their hair naturally and are not being forced to conform to workplace standards rooted in anti-black sentiment spanning Oregon's racist and exclusionary history. Race-specific hairstyles should not inhibit a student's ability to succeed in the classroom, attend work, or participate in their communities. Not only do disruptions, such as being sent home from work or school, or being excluded from participating in a school event, have real impacts on student success, student completion, and the economy, but it reinforces the marginalization of Black Oregonians that has plagued Oregon's history into the present day.

Oregon has a responsibility to affirm to all Oregonians race-based discrimination will not be accepted at school, at work, or anywhere in our state. Similar legislation has passed or in the process of passing in dozens of states, including Washington and California. Let's make sure Oregon is next.

**I urge you to vote yes on HB2935.**