

Jasmine Cassanova-Dean

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 Jasmine Cassanova-Dean, and I live in Gresham. I am here today in support of HB 2935, the CROWN Act.

I identify as a Black Afro-Latina, a mama to my beautiful young daughter, and as an organizer. I've lived in Portland all my life, during which it has been legal to discriminate against Black people for wearing the kind of hairstyles we choose to wear. I am here today because enough is enough

I remember my own experience where I've been given the "dress code" part of the personnel handbook at work, and the sections regarding hair cleanliness were discussed with me. Today, I know that this is a common experience for Black women, who are 30% more likely to be given corporate grooming policies at work than nonBlack women.

I recall times where my coworker with long hair was told how beautiful their hair was and at the same time asking about if mine was real. I recall in school my teachers asking my mom or grandmother if "everything was okay" because they thought my hair looked unmanaged. I remember being called to the back of the store/restaurant at my first job because my hair was dyed red and that's not a "natural color" and I needed to change it or risk suspension. From workplaces to school settings, when Black people have experiences like these, we are being told that we don't belong and that our hair is not okay. It's time to end this.

This bill will not just affect Black women like me. It also makes me think about my partner, who has been looked at as a thug for having dreads and being a Black man, people have crossed the street and he even said he wants to cut his hair as he notices more people treat him differently as if they are scared of him.

I am the Black Lives Matter Organizer with Unite Oregon, where we organize across cultures and across urban and rural areas in the state. I've heard firsthand from our Black community members who need protections in place so that we can all feel safer at work and school. The CROWN Act would help make this possible, and I am excited

to see it move through the Senate and soon become law. Please vote yes on HB 2935, the CROWN Act. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Cassanova-Dean  
BLM Organizer, Unite Oregon  
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