

# ALDERPERSON AGENDA ITEM MEMO

To: **Government Affairs**

From: Sean Lowe

Date: 4/20/2023

Subject: Crown Act Resolution to the State of Wisconsin/City of Wauwatosa Ordinance

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## A. Background/Rationale

The CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural hair) Act has been stalled Federally and State-wide. This is long overdue to be passed.

## B. Key Issues for Consideration

There is no legal precedent in state and federal statute to protect individuals against discrimination based on natural hair. Some schools and workplaces around the nation have used dress codes and grooming policies prohibiting natural hairstyles seen in the Black community such as braids, bantu knots and locs. Some Black children have been treated like criminals due to their hairstyles.

## C. Fiscal Impact

None

## D. Requested Action

Adopt a resolution as a Common Council to send to the State letting them know we are urging the passing of the Crown Act that was previously introduced by WI State Rep Lakeshia Myers.

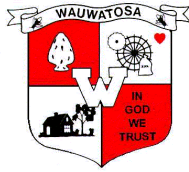
In a second and separate action, requesting that the City of Wauwatosa develop an ordinance similar to the one passed in the City of Milwaukee in 2021.

## E. Attachments

Attached proposed bill and language for resolution. Attached ordinance language and City of Milwaukee language and ordinance for reference.

Whereas despite great strides made by citizens, legislators, and courts to reverse and

2. resolve the long-lasting damaging effects of racism, hair remains a source of racial
3. discrimination with serious economic and health consequences, especially for Black
4. individuals.
5. Whereas This sort of discrimination is encouraged by purportedly “race neutral”
6. grooming and dress code policies in the workplace that enforce a Eurocentric image of
7. professional hair. Enforcing an image of professionalism that was created with European
8. features as the norm disparately affects individuals who do not naturally fall into that



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9. norm.

10. Whereas Black women, adhering to such grooming policies, must often employ harmful  
11. styling practices like time consuming heat straightening, or chemical permanent relaxers,  
12. both of which can lead to hair damage and hair loss. Thus, braids, locks, and twists,  
13. Also known as “protective hairstyles,” are necessary for healthy Black hair maintenance.  
14. Whereas while anti-discrimination laws presently protect the choice to wear an afro,  
15. afros are not the only natural presentation of Black hair. The CROWN Act will ensure 16.  
protection against  
17. discrimination based on hairstyles by extending statutory protection to hair texture and 18.  
Protective styles in the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).  
19. Whereas Adding hair texture and protective hairstyles as a protected class will prohibit 20.  
an employer from withholding or terminating employment or promotion based on  
21. discrimination against the protected employee or applicant’s hairstyle.  
22. Whereas according to the Dove CROWN Research Study Black Women are (1) made to  
23. be more aware of corporate grooming policies than white women, (2) hair is judged  
24. differently on Black Women, (3) workplace bias against hairstyles impact Black Womens  
25. ability to celebrate their natural beauty and (4) black womens hair is 3.5 time more likely  
26. to be perceived as unprofessional . [1]  
27. Now, therefore, be in resolved that The City of Wauwatosa will continue to advocate for the  
28. CROWN Act on the state and federal level and support protections for Natural Hair.  
29. We the City of Wauwatosa Common Council urge the State of Wisconsin to pass the  
CROWN Act proposed by State Rep Lakeisha Myers

Ordinance language-PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLE means a hairstyle necessitated by, or resulting from, the characteristics of a hair texture associated with race, such as natural hair, braids, locks, an afro, curls, cornrows, twists, and any other hairstyle, treated or untreated, which is commonly associated with racial, ethnic, or cultural identity. Any complaint should be sent to the Equal Rights Division at the State of Wisconsin