

 e-Alert

08.11.22

Massachusetts Enacts the CROWN Act

Background

Massachusetts joined 17 other states when the [Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair \(CROWN\) Act](#) was signed into law on July 26, 2022. The act takes effect October 24, 2022, which prohibits discrimination based on raced-related hairstyles in the workplace, school, and places of public accommodation. The CROWN Act expands the definition of race within several of Massachusetts' statutes where discrimination of race is prohibited.

Summary

The new law expands the definition of race, in regard to prohibiting discrimination based on race, to include traits historically associated with race, including natural or protective hairstyles. Natural or protective hairstyle is defined as hair texture, hair type, and hairstyles. Hairstyles include, but are not limited to braids, locks, twists, Bantu knots, and other formations.

The following Massachusetts' statutes, prohibit discrimination regarding race, and with this new law will now include an expanded definition of race, this list may not be

This content is provided with the understanding that HR Knowledge is not rendering legal advice. While every effort is made to provide current information, the law changes regularly and laws may vary depending on the state or municipality. The material is made available for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice or your professional judgment. You should review applicable laws in your jurisdiction and consult experienced counsel for legal advice. If you have any questions regarding this content, please contact [HR Knowledge](#).

exhaustive:

- Anti-Discrimination Law – Prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, and lending ([M.G.L. c. 151B § 4](#))
- Public School Enrollment ([M.G.L. c.76§ 5](#))
- School Bullying and Prevention Plans ([M.G.L. c.71§ 370](#))
- Charter Schools ([M.G.L. c. 71§ 89](#))
- Public Accommodations ([M.G.L. c.272 § 92A](#))

If certain workspaces need hair and grooming restrictions because of health and safety concerns, non-discriminatory accommodations should be considered and implemented when feasible. School districts, school committees, and public schools are expressly prohibited from adopting and/or implementing a policy or code that impairs or prohibits natural or protective hairstyles.

Employer Next Steps

- Employers should review their handbooks and related policies on the dress and appearance of employees.
- Employers should notify and train all managers, supervisors, and hiring and training personnel on the expansion of this protected category.
- Schools should train teachers and education staff on the expansion of this protected category.
- If you are a Full-Service or Virtual HR client and would like our assistance with updating your policy, please [email us](#).

This content is provided with the understanding that HR Knowledge is not rendering legal advice. While every effort is made to provide current information, the law changes regularly and laws may vary depending on the state or municipality. The material is made available for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice or your professional judgment. You should review applicable laws in your jurisdiction and consult experienced counsel for legal advice. If you have any questions regarding this content, please contact [HR Knowledge](#).

The People Simplifying HR

For almost twenty years, HR Knowledge has made it our mission to demystify the complex and daunting process of HR management. We do more than just provide the level of service and technology you'd expect from an industry leader. We combine an unparalleled passion for service with our decades of HR, payroll, and benefits experience to provide our clients with personalized and actionable advice that is second—to—none. From managed payroll to employee benefits to HR support, we can help your organization thrive, grow, and reduce operating costs—no matter what industry you serve. Whether you're interested in our Full-Service solution or just need your employee handbook written, HR Knowledge can help you minimize risk while staying on top of compliance regulations. The bottom line? We're not just another cloud-based technology company that also does HR, #WeAreHR. [Get the scoop](#) on how we can help you simplify HR.



@WEAREHRK

This content is provided with the understanding that HR Knowledge is not rendering legal advice. While every effort is made to provide current information, the law changes regularly and laws may vary depending on the state or municipality. The material is made available for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice or your professional judgment. You should review applicable laws in your jurisdiction and consult experienced counsel for legal advice. If you have any questions regarding this content, please contact [HR Knowledge](#).