

Law Against Discrimination Based on Hair Styles Passed

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An McV Labor & Employment Law Alert

July 30, 2024

On July 23, 2024, Hon. Governor Pierluisi signed into law P.R. Act 106-2024, known as the “Law Against Discrimination Based on Hair Styles”, to declare the government’s public policy against discrimination in the offering of services, employment, education and housing, in both the public and private sectors, when it is based on an individual’s hair texture or use of protective hairstyles that are commonly associated with particular racial, ethnic or national origin groups, not limited to the afro descendants. This Act defines protective hairstyles as those worn to maintain naturally curly hair, including, but not limited to, tight coils or curls, locs, cornrows, twists, Bantu knots and afros.

P.R. Act 106-2024 amends a series of labor and employment antidiscrimination and harassment laws, such as Act 100-1959 (general antidiscrimination statute), Act 90-2020 (prohibiting workplace harassment, and Act 131-1943 (known as the “Puerto Rico Civil Rights Act”), to include a prohibition to private employers from discriminating, harassing, or otherwise affecting the employment opportunities of a person because of their hair texture or use of protective hairstyles commonly associated with a particular race, ethnicity, or national origin. The Act further requires all private employers to adopt and modify their rules and policies to comply with the precepts of this law.

P.R. Act 106-2024 became effective immediately. Employers are advised to review their handbook policies and procedures to comply with this statute. This new law may serve as a good juncture for employers to provide training refreshers to their manager and employees on the company’s equal employment, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

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