

Publications

Pennsylvania Adopts the CROWN Act

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On November 25, 2025, Pennsylvania enacted [House Bill No. 439](#), titled “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act” (CROWN). CROWN amends the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) to prohibit discrimination based upon hair types, styles, and textures associated with race and hair coverings associated with religion. The CROWN amendments take effect January 24, 2026.

Specifically, CROWN amends the PHRC’s definition of “race” to include certain traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and styles such as locs, braids, twists, coils, Bantu knots, afros, and extensions. “Religious creed” now includes hair coverings and hairstyles historically associated with religious practices.

CROWN allows limited exceptions when legitimate workplace health or safety interests or bona fide occupational qualifications exist. For an employer to establish that an exception exists, it must meet all four of the following elements:

1. A health or safety risk would exist without the rule;
2. The rule is adopted for nondiscriminatory reasons;
3. The rule is specifically tailored to the position or activity; and
4. The rule is applied equally to all individuals in similarly situated roles.

Further, employers may adopt and enforce an otherwise valid workplace policy to prevent a hostile work environment, provided the policy is adopted for nondiscriminatory reasons and is applied equally.

Pennsylvania’s adoption of CROWN brings its anti-discrimination laws in line with more than 20 other states and cities that have adopted similar protections. Employers with at least four employees should review, and where applicable, modify, its dress code, uniform, and grooming policies to ensure none are violative of CROWN.