

# Rooted in Change: Texas Enacts the CROWN Act

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Since its inception in 2019, the Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair (CROWN) movement has been a catalyst for change, inspiring over [twenty states](#) to address workplace inequality by confronting the pervasive issue of race-based hair discrimination.

In September 2023, [Texas](#) joined the growing list of states committed to rectifying biases and prejudices related to natural hair and hairstyles associated with racial and ethnic identities.

Employers in the Lone Star State should take note, as the Texas CROWN Act specifically prohibits employment discrimination based on hair texture or hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race. (The Act also prohibits such discrimination in educational institutions and the housing sector.)

## The CROWN Act's Background

The CROWN Coalition was founded in early 2019 with the goal of championing the state and federal enactment of anti-hair discrimination legislation. On July 3, 2019, [California](#) was the first state to enact a CROWN Act by expanding the definition of “race” in the state’s Fair Employment and Housing Act to include hair textures and hairstyles closely associated with race.

Just nine days later, [New York](#) became the second state to prohibit hair discrimination in the workplace. Since then, the following states have enacted variations of the CROWN Act into law: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

On May 27, 2023, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed [H.B. 567](#) into law, officially enacting the Texas CROWN Act. The legislation, which amended Chapter 21 of the Texas Labor Code, broadens the definition of race discrimination to include discrimination against an employee’s hair texture or “protective hairstyle” historically associated with race. “Protective hairstyle” is specifically defined to include braids, locks, and twists.

This law went into effect on September 1, 2023.

While twenty-three states have enacted their own variations of the Act, and despite passage by the U.S. House of Representatives, the federal CROWN Act failed to pass the Senate in 2020 and 2022.

## **Action Items for Texas Employers**

With the Texas CROWN Act having been in effect for several months, Texas employers should review their policies and procedures to ensure compliance (if they have not done so already).

**Employers are recommended to do the following to be compliant with the Act and foster an inclusive work environment:**

- Update and review their employee handbooks and written policies, focusing on revising dress code and grooming policies that may discriminate against natural hair and hairstyles.
- Train employees on these new requirements and, in particular, focus on ensuring that management-level and HR employees are aware of the Act's requirements.

Employers in other states are similarly reminded to review whether their state has enacted a version of the CROWN Act, and they should be prepared to comply with all applicable requirements.

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