



1201 16th St., N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

September 21, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association—who strive to nurture and respect all students and to appreciate the individuality of each one—we ask you to vote YES on the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act, H.R. 5309. Votes on this issue may be included in the NEA’s Report Card on the 116th Congress.

All students deserve acceptance for who they are. Discrimination that targets students of African descent based on “natural” or “protective” hairstyles, such as cornrows, twists, and braids, denies these students the support they are entitled to and violates our civil rights laws. Although some federal courts have, unfortunately, issued rulings that validate discrimination based on hair texture and hairstyle in schools, workplaces, and in other settings, the CROWN Act would outlaw this.

In the most egregious cases of discrimination, students have been excluded from graduation ceremonies or been forced to submit to haircuts by school authorities, and employees have been fired from their jobs, simply because they choose to wear cornrows, braids, or similar natural or protective hairstyles. This discrimination is humiliating and inflicts serious emotional harm, particularly on young people.

The CROWN Act would outlaw and provide remedies for discrimination based on hair texture and hairstyle. Several states and municipal bodies have already passed versions of the CROWN Act, and Congress has an important role to play on this issue as well. We urge you to vote YES on the CROWN Act and send a strong message that discrimination in any form is intolerable in our schools, and throughout our society.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association