

HB 2935 in support
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation
May 17, 2021 at 8am, virtual meeting

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, Senators Dembrow,
Gelser, Heard, Linthicum and Manning Jr.,

My name is Mariotta Gary-Smith and I am a member of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (herein OCBA). The OCBA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Black and African American residents and communities. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development and partnerships.

I'm writing this letter of support for the proposed bill, HB 2935, Prohibits discrimination at interscholastic activities/natural hair permissible at these events.

Earlier this spring, Oregon passed the CROWN Act, which bans hair discrimination (specific to public school systems and employers), in particular to cultural hair styles like braids, locs and other Afrocentric hair presentation. I see HB 2935 as an extension of the CROWN Act. There have been several incidents with young Black people who've had to cut or change their hair in order to participate in athletic events; these cases have had national attention. Here's an article about the most recent case of hair discrimination in youth sports that received national attention; the impact and trauma inflicted on this young person and their family isn't acceptable:
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/14/us/hair-discrimination-softball-durham-trnd/index.html>

I have personally experienced unwanted and non-consensual touching around my hair and its presentation in a workplace; I had the ability to respond to that traumatic and harmful experience in a way that stopped that treatment from happening to another Black person. Young people deserve to engage in youth sports and activities without being targeted for their hair – the focus should be on the spirit of competition and supporting their participation.

I urge you to support HB 2935 and vote yes.

Thank you.



Mariotta Gary-Smith

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on Black Affairs**

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