



Recommendation for Action

File #: 22-1987, Agenda Item #: 43.

6/9/2022

Posting Language

Approve an ordinance amending Chapters 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, and 5-4 of the City Code to prohibit discrimination based on protective hairstyle in housing, public accommodations, employment, and employment by City contractors, and to be known as the “Austin CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act.”

Lead Department

Office of Civil Rights.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

December 12, 2021 - Council approved Ordinance No. 20211202-030, which created the Office of Civil Rights, revised enforcement procedures of the City’s Civil Rights ordinances, and added sexual harassment as a prohibited employment practice. Council provided direction for the City Manager to work with stakeholders and provide recommendations for strengthening protections related to hair style and hair texture.

For More Information:

Carol Johnson, Civil Rights Director, 512-978-1534.

Additional Backup Information:

On June 28, 2018, Council adopted Resolution No. 20180628-062 directing the City Manager to review the City’s civil rights ordinances in Title 4 and Title 5 of City Code and to recommend changes to improve ways the City of Austin could most effectively enforce and educate residents about these laws. In August 2020, City Council authorized the creation of the Office of Civil Rights.

On December 12, 2021, Council approved Ordinance No. 20211202-030, which created the Office of Civil Rights, revised enforcement procedures of the City’s Civil Rights ordinances, and provided enhanced protections against sexual harassment as a prohibited employment practice. Council provided direction for the City Manager to work with stakeholders and provide recommendations for strengthening civil rights protections and enforcement in Austin. The Office of Civil Rights has conducted numerous outreach events related to this direction.

As part of its 2022 Civil Rights Listening Tour, the Office of Civil Rights hosted, “Civil Rights ATX: Discussing the CROWN Act in Our Community” on February 23, 2022, during which was discussed hair discrimination existing in Austin and how passing a CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act might provide protections for Austinites in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

As a result of information obtained during its stakeholder and community engagement sessions, the Office of Civil Rights is submitting for Council approval of the “Austin CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act” - an ordinance amending Chapter 5-1, Chapter 5-2, Chapter 5-3, and Chapter 5-4 of City

Code to prohibit discrimination based on protective hairstyle in housing, public accommodations, employment, and employment by city contractors.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Government that Works for All, Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Health and Environment, Culture and Lifelong Learning.