

From: [Anna Bosin](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Zack Fields](#); [Celeste Hodge](#)
Subject: Support for HB312
Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022 10:27:49 PM

Good evening, I support allowing natural hairstyles in schools and workplaces. Students need to feel safe from racial profiling and discrimination at schools. Humiliation and violation by school teachers, coaches and SROs regarding locs, dreads, braids, etc have been videotaped around the country. This bill sends a message of support for families and students that individuality is welcome at school.

The military-the most restrictive dress code employer-is relaxing their hair style options to include natural hair styles so other employers can as well!

This legislation can allow students and teachers to focus on curriculum. It will support EEO legislation as well.

We should celebrate individually and I love how hair can be a beautiful personal expression!

Anna Bosin
Anchorage resident

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: mwilson@gci.net
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: mwilson@gci.net
Subject: Comment on Natural Hair
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 10:54:08 AM

Every culture in America is allowed to wear their natural hair. Why is it that people of color (particularly African Americans) cannot wear their natural hair? Chemical processing can break down hair and cause breakage. However, there are ways African Americans can wear their hair straight if they wish. This includes: wigs, weaves, or through heat elements such as a flat iron, or a pressing comb, Although, a pressing comb can break down your hair too. ex: if the comb is too hot, it can burn your hair. Or if the hair is damp when the pressing comb is applied. Wearing natural hair has nothing to do with learning or doing a job. Most people that wear their hair naturally can comb their hair and go.

From: [Gay Rhiana](#)
To: [House Education](#); [Rep. Geran Tarr](#)
Subject: HB 312
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 10:07:35 AM

Hello, my name is Rhiana, a BIPOC educator in Anchorage School District. Please allow ALL students and staff to freely wear their hair, however they choose. Having the freedom, allows for learning, growth and overall, a peaceful classroom. I could not imagine sending a student home, to the office or writing up a referral for how they chose to style their hair.

I am a 10-year educator and went to ASD as a student. Alumni of all ASD and UAA schools, please reach out to me for further information.

Rhiana Gay
Creekside Park Elementary

From: [Liz Mering](#)
To: [House Education](#); [Rep. Geran Tarr](#); [Rep. Sarah Vance](#)
Subject: HB 312 Natural Hair Styles
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 8:39:48 AM

Good morning

With work I was unable to testify this morning but thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

My name is Elisabeth Mering and I live and work in Homer. I am writing in support for HB 312, Allow Natural Hairstyles.

This bill is a straightforward measure to protect all Alaskans from discrimination. Neither schools nor work places should discriminate against people wearing natural hairstyles and embracing their ethnic and cultural identity.

I have never had to worry that I would be reprimanded for my natural hairstyle and no youth in school nor person seeking employment should be reprimanded for their natural hairstyle.

Please support HB 312

Thank you
Liz Mering

From: [Sara's Email](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 312 support
Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022 3:00:11 PM

Hello House Education Committee members,

I'm writing in support of HB 312.

Thank you for considering this common sense legislation. Our schools should be welcoming places for students of all backgrounds and cultures. By explicitly prohibiting dress codes that restrict natural hair styles, we are protecting students from discrimination and misunderstandings at school. Hairstyles have absolutely no connection to a student's ability to succeed in school, and they do not affect the educational environment. I hope this bill is enacted, and that it sends a message to our young people that we value them, and that they do not need to alter their natural appearance in order to be accepted and thrive in Alaska.

Sincerely,
Sara Chapell
Haines

From: [Löki Gale Tobin](#)
To: [Rep. Geran Tarr](#)
Cc: [House Education](#)
Subject: Re: HB 312 - Allow Natural Hair Styles
Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 10:23:24 AM

Good day Representative Tarr,

Thank you for introducing House Bill 312, a bill to allow for Natural Hair Styles in our public schools and workplaces.

As a young child, I struggled with my natural hair. As one of few Black mixed race kids in the schools I attended, my uniqueness often made me the subject of teasing and bullying for the protective hairstyles my mom would spend hours on were unfamiliar to those around me. It was after a particularly terrible year, my mom decided to start chemically straightening my hair in hopes I would be better protected from bullying. In some way, I believe she hoped I would "pass" as not part Black.

For those who are unfamiliar with the practice, no-lye chemical relaxers are applied to a person's hair to strip the cuticle to relax the natural curl. This inherently weakens the hair, thus ensuring a person who starts relaxing must continue relaxing any new hair growth in perpetuity unless they wish to experience significant hair breakage. Chemical relaxers have been known to cause significant burning and scarring of the scalp if not used correctly. In some horrific cases, a bad application of a chemical relaxer can cause a person to lose all their hair.

I continued relaxing my hair throughout high school and university, up until I left Alaska for my Peace Corps service in Azerbaijan. Prior to starting my service, I engaged in what is called, "the Big Chop," removing all of my chemically relaxed hair. Throughout my service, I wore my hair naturally and in protective styles - an experience that brought me great joy and confidence. Funnily enough, my most read blog posts from that time were on how I cared for my natural hair.

Upon returning to Alaska, I experienced great fear. The teasing and bullying I experienced as a child caused me to rethink my approach to my personal appearance and I wondered if my newfound strength would last me through any potential negative attention. I shared my fears with my friends and family and was assured that society wise -things had changed while I was gone. I had my doubts, but forged ahead.

Unfortunately, my fears were affirmed soon after my return to Alaska. I was asked by my employer to change my hairstyle as there was concern my appearance was not "office appropriate." As I had student loan debt, rent, and medical expenses, I did not have the choice to fight this office policy and potentially lose my employment. I had little recourse other than to altering my natural hair. It was clear that who I am and how I look naturally was inappropriate for a business office.

I am thankful that I am now in a place where I am supported and able to share my experience and my voice in support of policies that affirm everyone's right to be who they authentically are where they are. I recommend amending this legislation to include protective hairstyles, like headwraps and do-rags, to ensure an inclusive understanding of all natural Black hairstyles.

Löki Gale Tobin, MA
(pronouns: she/her)

House Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99081

Re: HB 312 – Allow Natural Hairstyles

March 11, 2022

Dear Chair Drummond and Story and Members of the House Education Committee:

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska (“PPAA”) writes today in strong support of SB 312, a bill that prohibits forms of racial discrimination in school and employer dress codes. Dress codes banning certain hairstyles perpetuate racist stereotypes and lead to over-policing and over-disciplining of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) people, which has real consequences on educational, professional, and health outcomes.

Planned Parenthood is firmly committed to creating a world in which *all* people have autonomy over their own bodies and health. We know that the fight for bodily autonomy, reproductive rights, and racial justice are one and the same – it is the same control over Black and Brown people’s reproductive health that is at play when schools and employers implement discriminatory dress codes and over-police BIPOC people’s bodies.

For many, Afrocentric and Indigenous hairstyles are an expression of identity and hold historical, cultural, and spiritual significance. Over time, hair has become a link between history and current identities and represents a rejection of Eurocentric notions that the texture of white or European hair is inherently “professional” and beautiful, while the texture and styling of non-white hair is inherently unprofessional and undesirable. Dress codes that embed these racial stereotypes into policy perpetuate white supremacist belief systems and result in disciplinary discrimination against students and employees of color.

Extensive research shows that schools discriminatorily enforce dress codes against Black students, especially Black girls, due to race- and gender-based stereotypes.¹ Dress codes that police hairstyles lead educators to discipline Black and students of color more often and more harshly than they do white students. This discipline causes students to lose class time, which can deny equal opportunities and impact graduation rates and access to higher education.

The harm of such discriminatory policies is not hypothetical: in 2018, a student in Anchorage who is Yup’ik and Inupiaq was told he could not wear a sealskin cap during graduation, which he intended to

¹ National Women’s Law Center, *Seriously, Don’t Touch Our Hair* (2021), available at: <https://nwl.org/seriously-dont-touch-our-hair-nwlc-files-amicus-brief-supporting-students-challenging-race-based-discipline-and-harassment/>; National Women’s Law Center, *Dress Coded: Black girls, bodies, and bias in D.C. schools* (2018), available at: <https://nwl.org/resource/dresscoded/>

honor his culture and ancestors as he received his diploma.² Prohibitions on natural hairstyles are much like dress codes prohibitions that forbid students from incorporating traditional regalia, such as feathers and beaded caps, into their school experience: both policies prevent BIPOC students from being able to celebrate their culture and their history and lead to over-policing of Black and Brown people. The district has since changed its dress code policy, and we urge the state to take a step toward preventing such discrimination and trauma by passing HB 312.

Sincerely,

Morgan Lim
Alaska Government Relations Manager
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska

² Tegan Hanlon, *Anchorage Daily News*, Anchorage high school students can now wear traditional tribal regalia at graduation after this mom's efforts (April 2019, available at: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/education/2019/04/21/anchorage-high-school-students-can-now-wear-traditional-tribal-regalia-at-graduation-after-this-moms-effort/>)