

SENATE No. 2796

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

SENATE, March 28, 2022.

The committee on Senate Ways and Means to whom was referred the House Bill prohibiting discrimination based on natural and protective hairstyles (House, No. 4554); reports, recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text of Senate document numbered 2796.

For the committee,
Michael J. Rodrigues

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SECTION 1. Section 7 of chapter 4 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following 2 clauses:-

Sixty-second, “Race”, as applied to a prohibition on discrimination based on race, shall include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type and protective hairstyle.

Sixty-third, “Protective hairstyle”, shall include, but not be limited to, braids, locks, twists and Bantu knots.

SECTION 2. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 1C the following section:-

Section 1D. A school district, school committee, public school, nonsectarian school or the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association or any equivalent school organization shall not adopt or implement a policy or code, including, but not limited to, any policy or code pertaining to a student’s participation in sports or athletic events, that impairs or prohibits a natural or protective hairstyle that is historically associated with race.

15 The department of elementary and secondary education shall provide written guidance
16 for the administration of this section.

17 SECTION 3. Chapter 151B of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
18 section 3A the following section:-

19 Section 3B. The commission may adopt, promulgate, amend and rescind rules and
20 regulations or formulate policies and make recommendations as necessary to effectuate the
21 purposes of clauses Sixty-second and Sixty-third of section 7 of chapter 4.