

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 21-2—HB 6515

Emergency Certification

**AN ACT CREATING A RESPECTFUL AND OPEN WORLD FOR
NATURAL HAIR**

SUMMARY: This act makes it an illegal practice to (1) discriminate based on a person’s hair texture and protective hairstyle in employment, public accommodations, housing, credit practices, union membership, and state agency practices or (2) deprive any person of any rights secured or protected by the Connecticut Constitution or the United States Constitution. It does so by specifying that the term “race” includes ethnic traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles.

The act adds this protection to those afforded under the existing human rights law under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). CHRO has the authority to investigate complaints of discriminatory practices. The act also applies to the laws that govern awarding agency, municipal public works, and quasi-public agency project contracts.

Under the act, “protective hairstyles” include such things as wigs, headwraps, and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros, and afro puffs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Related Act

PA 21-2, JSS, § 405, adds hair and hairstyles to the definition of race in the education statutes’ anti-discrimination law, conforming it to PA 21-2.