

Kansas State Senate
Support/Opposition for the CROWN ACT

TO: Mr. Chairman, Senator Thompson
FROM: Sharron Watley
DATE: January 8th, 2024

Dear Chairman, Thompson and Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

I want to personally Thank you all for allowing the Crown Act to be reviewed and have an opportunity to be passed in the state of Kansas. This Senate Bill-36 will prevent the injustice faced by adults, like myself and children, for specifically, wearing our natural hair, in a professional and school setting.

Late last year, in the state of Kansas, an 8 year old Native American boy was forced to cut his hair in order to continue attending his elementary school. At the time, it was the school's policy that boys' were not allowed to have their hair go past their collar. So, in fear of him being suspended or expelled, his Mother cut his hair. Due to the heavy outpour, for the child, the school district did change their policy. But, imagine if the Crown Act was already in place, this child would have never experienced the hurt, pain, or fear of rejection, in order to be accepted at an elementary school. It is a common practice, in some Native cultures, that young boys and men grow their hair long, for religious purposes. Then cutting their hair when they are in mourning.

The Crown Act extends beyond Black individuals; it encompasses Brown, Mixed, and Native people, and for anyone who embraces their natural hair. It saddens me to learn that an 8-year-old experienced discrimination due to a policy, in my personal opinion, seems outdated. If we can appreciate having one of the greatest Quarterbacks of our time, who represents both Kansas and Missouri. Who wears a Curly Mohawk, and is paid millions, while influencing numerous people, children and adults, that replicates the exact same hair style. To what end, are we not able to accept an 8 year old boy, with long hair, attending school, who is learning their multiplication?

In conclusion, I strongly urge each of you to support The Crown Act, and pass the Senate Bill-36, for the state of Kansas. This will ensure protection for individuals like myself and future generations. That will allow us to live, work, and attend schools in a non-judgmental environment. Thank you.

God Bless,

Sharron Watley