



# SIGMA GAMMA RHO SORORITY, INC.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

*"A Non-Governmental Organization Associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information"*



Date of Testimony: Thursday, March 10, 2022

Bill Number: SB130

**Proponent Written Only Testimony by the Kansas Chapters of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated**

Dear Chairman Olson and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee:

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated is a historically African American global organization with a membership of over 100,000 in the U.S., Bahamas, Bermuda, the U.S. Virgin Islands, United Arab Emirates, Canada, Germany and Korea. On behalf of the Alumnae and Undergraduate members of Sigma Gamma Rho in the state of Kansas, I write in strong support for SB 130, or the **CROWN Act**. We urge your support for the bill to pass out of committee favorably and to the Senate floor for final action vote.

Hair discrimination remains a source of racial injustice with serious economic consequences for Black people. **Black women are 50 percent more likely** to be sent home or know of a black woman sent home from the workplace because of her hair.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, **Black women are 80 percent more likely to change her natural hair to meet social norms or expectations at their place of employment.**<sup>2</sup> In the U.S., Federal law does not currently afford protection for race-based hair discrimination, even if the hairstyle is inherent to racial identity.<sup>3</sup> Natural hairstyles inherent to Black identity, such as locs, braids, twists and bantu knots are ranked the lowest for 'job readiness.'<sup>4</sup>

No individual should ever be "judged" or held back by their appearance. In 2006, the EEOC issued its Compliance Manual on Race and Color Discrimination, which details guidelines around what constitutes discrimination based on physical characteristics in the workplace.<sup>5</sup> The manual states that employers can impose neatness and grooming standards, **as long as racial differences are taken into account and the rules are applied equally across racial lines.**<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Navy changed its grooming policy to include braided styles and locs, which follows a similar decision by the Army in 2017.<sup>7</sup>

In its 100-year history, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority's mission is to advance civic and social efforts to end policy practices such as hair discrimination and to create a more equitable and inclusive beauty experience for black women and girls. **We believe elected officials must ensure that traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and hairstyle, are protected from discrimination in the workplace and in public schools.** Diversity has a positive impact on our state's economic viability. Corporations that fire, refuse to hire, or refuse to promote a Black individual because of their Protective Hairstyle not only destabilize individual households of Kansans, but it impacts the broader economy as the workforce boasts more professional working Black women than ever.<sup>8</sup>

Thank you and we ask your support of the CROWN Act in Kansas known as SB 130 and I welcome any opportunity to further discuss the importance of this piece of legislation with all committee members.

All the Best,

**Amber Sellers | National Legislative Action Chair**

**Member, Gamma Chi Sigma Alumnae Chapter | Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.**

[1] <https://www.thecrownact.com/>

[2] [https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/the-crown-act.html?cULID=6499C46E9136373BCDDF2F8162EE4707B74E2SE8&cULID=6499C46E9136373BCDDF2F8162EE4707B74E25E8&utm\\_campaign=email\\_Purpose2\\_2019&utm\\_source=Unilever&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=CrownAct&profileid=14067196](https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/the-crown-act.html?cULID=6499C46E9136373BCDDF2F8162EE4707B74E2SE8&cULID=6499C46E9136373BCDDF2F8162EE4707B74E25E8&utm_campaign=email_Purpose2_2019&utm_source=Unilever&utm_medium=email&utm_content=CrownAct&profileid=14067196)

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *ibid.*

[5] <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/race-color.html>

[6] *ibid.*

[7] <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/messages/Documents/NAVADMINS/NAV2018/NAV18163.txt>

[8] Mark DeWolf, 12 Stats About Working Women, U.S. Department of Labor Blog (March 1, 2017)