

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3945

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 18, 2019

The Senate Judiciary Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3945.

This bill, as amended, updates the “Law Against Discrimination” (LAD), P.L.1945, c.169 (C.10:5-1 et seq.), to clarify and confirm that prohibited race discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of “traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles.” As defined in the bill, the term “protective hairstyles” includes, but is not limited to, “such hairstyles as braids, locks, and twists.” This change is intended to remove any confusion or ambiguity over the scope of the LAD and its applicability to race discrimination predicated on such traits.

Emphasizing the bill’s focus on hair-based discrimination, the bill is designated the “Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair Act,” or CROWN Act.

The bill is modeled after California Senate Bill No. 188, which was signed into law as 2019 Cal. Stat. ch. 58 on July 3, 2019, and New York Senate Bill No. 6209, signed into law as 2019 N.Y. Ch. 95 on July 12, 2019. The new California law takes effect on January 1, 2020, while the New York law took effect immediately upon enactment.

If this bill is enacted into law, it will take effect immediately.

The committee amendments to the bill:

- revise the bill’s title and synopsis to more accurately convey the scope of the bill’s text in addressing all forms of discrimination based on traits historically associated with race, and emphasize that its focus remains on hair-based discrimination by designating the bill the “Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair Act,” or CROWN Act.