

LOCAL LAW “I” FOR 2021

A LOCAL LAW OF THE COUNTY OF ALBANY, NEW YORK, AMENDING LOCAL LAW NO. 1 FOR 2013, ENTITLED "AN OMNIBUS HUMAN RIGHTS LAW FOR ALBANY COUNTY"

Introduced: 9/13/21

By Ms. Chapman, Messrs. Feeney, A. Joyce, Mss. Cunningham, Plotsky, Messrs. Peter, Clay, Fein, Miller, Reidy and Simpson:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE COUNTY OF ALBANY AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Title

This Local Law shall be known as the “CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair) Amendment” for Albany County.

SECTION 2. Legislative Intent

The purpose of this Local Law is to prevent employment discrimination based on natural hair texture and/or the use of protective hairstyles in Albany County.

Albany County is dedicated to protecting the rights of its residents and eliminating discrimination and bias in the workplace.

This Legislature hereby finds and determines that the history of our nation is riddled with laws and societal norms that subject those with certain visible characteristics, including natural hair texture and/or the use of protective hairstyles, to separate and unequal treatment in professional settings.

This Legislature further finds that, despite the efforts to reverse racist ideologies, natural hairstyles including braids, locs, cornrows, twists, Bantu knots, poufs, and Afros, as well as the use of turban wraps, continue to be a source of prejudice that have serious professional and economic consequences for individuals in Albany County.

Therefore, the purpose of this law is to amend the Albany County Omnibus Human Rights Law (Local Law No. 1 for 2013, as amended) to ban discrimination against the use of protective hairstyles and the wearing of natural hair textures.

SECTION 3. Prohibitions

Section 7, subsection 1. of Local Law No. 1 for 2013, “An Omnibus Human Rights Law for Albany County,” as amended, is further amended by the addition of a new subdivision (j) as follows:

(j) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer, employment agency, or licensing agency to deny any license, employment, or promotion to any individual by reason of the person’s natural hair texture, use of protective hairstyles, or use of turban wraps. The term “protective hairstyles” shall include styles such as braids, locs, cornrows, twists, Bantu knots, poufs, and similar styles meant to protect natural hair.

SECTION 4. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or the application thereof to any person, firm, or corporation, or circumstance, shall be adjusted by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgement shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or in its application to the person, individual, firm, or corporation or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

SECTION 5. Effective Date

This law shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State.

Referred to Law and Personnel Committees – 9/13/21

Favorable Recommendation Law Committee – 10/27/21

Favorable Recommendation Personnel Committee – 10/28/21

On long roll call vote the following members voted in favor: Messrs. Beston, Bruschi, Ms. Chapman, Messrs. Clay, Commisso, Ms. Cunningham, Messrs. Domalewicz, Efekoro, Ethier, Feeney, Fein, A. Joyce, R. Joyce, Kuhn, Mss. Lekakis, Mr. Mayo, Mss. McLaughlin, McLean Lane, Messrs. Miller, O’Brien, Peter, Ms. Plotsky, Messrs. Reidy, Reinhardt, Simpson, Touchette, Ward, and Willingham – 28

Those opposed – Messrs. Burgdorf, Drake, Grimm, Ms. Lockart, Messrs. Mauriello, Perlee, Ricard, Smith, Tunny and Ms. Whalen – 10

Local Law was adopted – 11/8/21