Engage PEO Client

Maryland Bans Race-Based Hair Discrimination

On May 7, 2020, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan announced, via a press release, the enactment of the state's **CROWN Act** (House Bill 1444), and dozens of other pending legislation, without his physical signature. Maryland's CROWN Act law will take effect on **October 1, 2020** and makes Maryland the 7th state—*following California, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Colorado, and Washington State*—to ban race-based hair discrimination.[1]

About Maryland's CROWN Act

Race-based hair discrimination laws are known as **CROWN Acts** in recognition of the national partnership and efforts of the **C**reating a **R**espectful and **O**pen **W**orld for **N**O Racism ("CROWN") Coalition[2] to ban discrimination based on hairstyles and textures in workplaces and schools.

Maryland's CROWN Act amends existing anti-discrimination laws in the following respects:

- Defining the term ***RACE*** to mean "traits associated with race, including hair texture, afro hairstyles, and protective hairstyles"; and
- Defining the phrase ***PROTECTIVE HAIRSTYLES*** to include hairstyles such as "braids, twists and locks."

Please contact your Engage HR Consultant if you have questions regarding Maryland's CROWN Act.

[1] On November 5, 2019, the Montgomery County Council in Maryland unanimously passed its local CROWN Act. Notably, Montgomery County's CROWN Act entitles individuals to seek ***up to a $5,000*** in civil penalties for violations.

[2] The CROWN Coalition was formerly known as the **C**reating a **R**espectful and **O**pen **W**orld for **N**atural Hair, but the name was recently revised to broaden the scope of the coalition's effort to end systematic racism.