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 Creating a Respectful and Open World for NO Racism (“CROWN”) Coalition² 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.

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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 Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair, but the name was recently revised to broaden the scope of the coalition’s effort to end systematic racism.