

January 4, 2024

Senator Mike Thompson  
Kansas State Capitol  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup>. St.  
Kansas State Legislature  
Room 136-E.  
Topeka, KS. 66612

Dear Mr. Chairman Senator Thompson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Crown Act Senate Bill-36. I am in support of this bill, as it speaks to the rights and acceptance of citizens from diverse backgrounds. More importantly, citizens of African descent.

For some time now, citizens of African descent have been criticized for the manner in which their hair is worn. Not criticized for anything said or actions taken but criticized simply for the style of their hair in places of employment. Individuals of African descent have been asked to confirm to the standards of as outlined in some employee manuals.

Personally, I have worn my hair in a 'natural hair style' since my days in high school at Wichita North High in the 1970's. It seems as though North High was accepting of diversity before the word diversity became popular, as it is today. In high school, administrators and educators were more concerned with the manner in which a student learned. Educators were also concerned with removing barriers that may have hindered one's education, clearing the path for continuing education at the collegiate level. It's interesting those 'barriers' did not include the style in which an individual wore their hair.

Even while attending Kansas State University and Wichita State University pursuing my undergraduate degree, the style of my hair was never an issue that impacted my path toward earning a college degree.

Following completion of my undergraduate and graduate degrees, I earned employment in the broadcast, customer service, banking and finance and now, higher education industries, yet my 'natural hair' was never an issue nor did the style disrupt my ability to earn a college degree and perform effectively in employment. In fact, because of my effective job performance, I was promoted to higher-level positions in customer service, banking and finance and higher education positions.

In my current leadership position at Wichita State University, the manner in which I wear my 'natural, has never been an issue, as it has not interfered with my ability to work diligently and receive promotions along the way.

So today, as we approach the celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I am standing in agreement for full support of the approval of the 'Crown Act' Senate Bill-36. Let's show an appreciation of diversity and all of its many facets, in particular, the style in which someone wears their hair.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen L. Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'K'.

Karen L. Wright, MS. Ed.