

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Enacts CROWN Act

On Nov. 25, 2025, Pennsylvania [amended](#) the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) to prohibit employers from discriminating against individuals on the basis of traits historically associated with race or religious creed, such as hairstyles and head coverings. The amendment takes effect on **Jan. 24, 2026**. Such legislation has gained popularity in recent years and is commonly referred to as Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act legislation.

Amendment Overview

The PHRA prohibits employers with **four or more employees** from refusing to hire, discharging or discriminating against an individual with respect to terms and conditions of employment on the basis of a protected trait (including race and religious creed).

The amendment expands the definition of “**race**” to include traits historically associated with race, including but not limited to hair texture and protected hairstyles (e.g., locs, braids, twists, coils, Bantu knots, afros and extensions). The amendment also expands the definition of “**religious creed**” to include head coverings and hairstyles historically associated with religious creeds.

However, employers may adopt or enforce otherwise valid workplace health and safety rules or policies justified as bona fide occupational qualifications or policies to prevent a hostile work environment if such policies are nondiscriminatory, necessary, narrowly tailored and applied equally.

Next Steps for Employers

Prior to the amendment, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission had already included protections against discrimination against individuals on the basis of hair texture and protective hairstyles associated with race in agency guidance. Therefore, covered Pennsylvania employers should already be in compliance with the amendment’s updated definition of race. However, employers may consider reviewing employment policies to ensure they do not discriminate on the basis of traits historically associated with either race or religious creed.

Provided to you by **Employco USA, Inc.**

Highlights

Nov. 25, 2025

Pennsylvania amended the PHRA to prohibit employers from discriminating against individuals on the basis of traits historically associated with race or religious creed.

Jan. 24, 2026

The amendment takes effect.

The PHRA has been amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of traits historically associated with race or religious creed.