



Hairstyle discrimination is intertwined with race

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California recently became the first state in the US to prohibit race-related hairstyle discrimination. The move comes after well-publicised cases in the US in which individuals alleged they faced racial discrimination by being forced to change their hair from its natural state.

Is Britain likely to follow suit?

The aptly named Crown Act in California states that dress codes and grooming policies that ban natural hair, “including afros, braids, twists and locks”, have a disparate impact on black individuals. Reasoning that hair remains a proxy for race, the California legislature found that these kinds of policies effectively force individuals to mask their ethnicity as they require them to ensure their hair confirms to European norms.

Accordingly, the legislation expands the relevant definition of race to...

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