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**BERKELEY PASSES FIRST-IN-THE-NATION BAN ON DISCRIMINATION ON RELIGIOUS HEADWEAR**

*Council aims to expand on the work of New York City and the state of California to prohibit discriminatory hair styling and appearance requirements*

**BERKELEY, CA** - At their October 29th Council meeting, the Berkeley City Council unanimously passed [the second reading](#) of an ordinance introduced by Councilmember Rigel Robinson that enacts a ban on racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious discrimination on the basis of hairstyle and headwear in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations.

This ban comes on the heels of a similar [policy](#) introduced in New York City, as well as the [CROWN Act](#), a California state law introduced by State Senator Holly Mitchell. While these initiatives specifically focus on African American hairstyles, Berkeley's ordinance goes further, covering all racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups and including facial hair and headwear. This makes Berkeley the first in the nation to explicitly prohibit discrimination in employment based on the wearing of religious headwear.

"The City of Berkeley has long been at the forefront of social progress. It's our mission as a City to promote universal respect for all, regardless of race, sex, language or religion. Adopting this law is a step in the right direction for the welfare of this community," said Councilmember Robinson.

Councilmember Ben Bartlett, a co-sponsor of the item, said, "I was once denied the job of a lifetime because I wore my hair in its natural dreadlock form. I'm proud to support this ban on discrimination because everyone deserves the freedom to be who they are."

Sameena Usman, Government Relations Coordinator for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Francisco Bay Area said, "Refusing employment, housing, or services based on one's headwear or hairstyle has been regularly used as a smokescreen for racism and Islamophobia. Every year, CAIR-CA receives dozens of cases of Muslims being discriminated against based on their headscarf or beard. No one should be refused services or employment based on exercising their First Amendment protected rights."

In an editorial published on October 18 supporting the policy, The Daily Cal wrote, “This is a huge step forward. This country is an amalgamation of different cultures, and everyone should feel free to express themselves in whatever ways make them feel comfortable.”

The legislation has been endorsed by several organizations, including the Cal Berkeley Democrats, CAIR San Francisco Bay Area, and Secure Justice.

The full proposal can be viewed [here](#).

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